# Gospel of Bhagavaan Gopinath ji



T. N. Dhar 'Kundan'

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Jagat Guru Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji Foundat

Edited by : T. N. Dhar 'Kundan'

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*Editor*

T.N. Dhar 'Kundan'

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Pandit Narayan Joo Bhan (Father of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji)



Shrimati Deva Maal
(Elder Sister)



Bhagavaan
Gopinath Ji



Shrimati Janaki Devi
(Younger Sister)




The Evening of 25 May 2003 was a memorable evening. In the Gopal Prasad Vyas Auditorium of the Hindi Bhawan Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji Charitable, Cultural and Research Foundation organized an impressive function at 5 p.m. The occasion was the release of the book "The Saint Extraordinary" a biography of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji authored by the well-known poet and writer Sri T.N. Dhar, 'Kundan'. The Chief Guest on the occasion was Professor Vachaspati Upadhyay, Vice Chancellor, Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, New Delhi.



A literary function was organized by Jagat Guru Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji Charitable, Cultural and Research Foundation, New Delhi at Kashmiri Pandit Sabha Amphalla Jammu in Connection with the release of the first ever book in Urdu on the life and teachings of Jagat Guru Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji entitled Bhagvaan Gopinath Ji- Akaid-O-Afkar on 10 September 2006. Dr. Premi Romani a well known writer has translated in Urdu, Sri T.N. Dhar Kundan's biography of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. The book was released by Justice B.L. Bhat, who presided over the Function.



On 25th December, 2007 Shrimati Sheila Dixit, Honourable Chief Minister of Delhi released the biography of the world famous Kashmiri Saint Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji in Hindi by Sri Dilip Kumar Koul. It is translation from the original book 'The Saint Extra ordinary' by T.N. Dhar Kundan in English.



The picture shows a 'Khose' made of silver.
He would use it for taking black tea at about 9 am.
and salted tea with milk in the afternoon.

The tea usually would get ice cold while in his hand for a prolonged time. Then he would either gulp it down or throw it away.



The big *kangri* was containing oblations of variety of things, jaggery, dry fruits *et al.* in to his 'Dhooni'. It was full of Scent and aroma. Bhagavaan Ji said that three crores of different Gods were propitiated by these oblations.

# Foreword

Our country has a long and established tradition of the words of God being passed down, generation after generation, through a spoken verse and written stanza. The scriptures that are part of our history and culture came into being at various times in the ancient history and the knowledge contained within them has guided millions of Hindus and also provided inspiration to so many others.

The knowledge contained in our scriptures is timeless and immortal. And given the very nature and essence of our way of life, our interpretation of the very same knowledge has evolved.

Our saints and seers have a long tradition of spreading knowledge through the spoken word – mystical lines that provide a newer meaning every time they are read. For that to happen, devotees and followers alike need to make an effort – and that is precisely what this book seeks to achieve.

Blessed by the Saint Extraordinary Himself, this Gospel of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji amplifies his mystery and allure. The essays provide deep insights into Sri Guru Maharaj and his message. All the authors without exception provide us a treasure trove of information and interesting nuggets of knowledge. I salute them all.

This compilation will prove to be an excellent resource base for spreading knowledge and insight – not just for the numerous devotees of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji – but even for those who are yet to be touched by his message and allure.

This project was conceived in 2009. The Divine works in mysterious ways and it is His manifest will that this book is now a reality.

On behalf of the collective multitudes of devotees we dedicate this book to Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji and seek his blessings and inspiration; for it is his will that allows us to continue with the work of spreading his message.

Col. (Dr.) M.K. Zarabi
Patron

# Introduction

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is the embodiment of the Divine Force and the benevolent form of Lord Vishnu. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji has given out Jewels through whispers. Once Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji expressed his spiritual state by quoting *sloka* 6, Chapter XV of the Gita, which reads: "That the Sun does not illumine, nor the moon, nor the fire. Having attained it, the spirit does not return again to the life of *samsara* such is my supreme abode." He has been an inborn genius. He is one of the most eminent saints who have ever graced India and, indeed, the world.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was born on 3 July 1898 (A.D.) corresponding to *Ashada Shukla Dwadeshi* in his ancestral home at Banamohalla, Srinagar (Kashmir). On that day Swami Vivekananda was on the pilgrimage to Kashmir. He went to a Hindu tailor's shop at Banamohalla. It was the only Hindu tailor's shop located in the ancestral building of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. It seems that Swamiji must have gone inside the house (by Divine inspiration) to see the new born, the same way as Magi going all the way to Bathleheim to bless the new born Christ. The father Sri Narayan Joo Bhan fondly called "Lallaseib" is said to have formally requested Swami Vivekananda Ji to visit the upper storey of the house from the said tailor's shop, on the auspicious occasion. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was highly evolved spiritually – an ocean of compassion. He was generous with his grace, which he showered on the deserving persons of all creeds and nationalities, and on the country in her hours of need. It seemed that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji started where most saints left off.

He shunned publicity and never travelled outside the Kashmir valley. On 28 May 1968 at 5.45 p.m. he left his mortal frame without any abnormal or unusual indication at his (Habbakadal) Braikujan *asana* which he adorned graciously for more than a decade. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji might have ceased to exist in his embodied form but he lives in his astral form even today. He continues to

help the humanity both in mundane and spiritual matters in his astral form. He still exists; existence is not just flesh and blood. It is the energy area that our consciousness uses. We can rejoice in his company and enjoy his astral presence by adopting the desirable qualities as *sezar, pazar* and *shozar* (rectitude, truthfulness and purity). He is perfect at all times. We are blessed when we know more and more about God by his grace. Sacred symbols, dictates and signs of Guru Maharaj consist of Divine Truth.

Bhagavaan Copinath Ji is a cosmic connector. He is the incarnation of supreme consciousness. According to him, suffering is inseparable from existence, but inward extinction of the self and of the senses culminates in a state of illumination beyond both suffering and existence. He has held sociability and peaceful co-existence as the main forms of love.

According to him, love imposes a sense of unity. High esteem is given more importance than humility. Love is the most important relationship that a person can enter into. The love that the aspirant has for the Master is above all other loves. Every day we spend a moment with Guru Maharaj. We feel the relationship is growing deeper and deeper. The fundamental requisite for a true disciple is an unquestioning love for the Master. Complete self-surrender and unquestioning love become possible when the disciple has unswerving faith in the Master, an indispensable part of true discipleship. Grace of the Master is gained by being always ready to serve him. No one can gain perfection by abstaining from work. We have to play out our roles as best as we can, leaving the results to Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji – the ever shining beacon light. We have to remember the fact that we are all responsible for the intricate web of humanity. For bliss, we have to cultivate love between ourselves. Inner peace is a necessary condition to make peace with others. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji after adopting his devotee does not leave him to be tempted more than he is able to bear.

Prayer and worship are not enough. We have to do our bit. Not always will the situation be to our liking. God seems to admire

best those services which are rendered without any motive and craving for credit. We have in us to deter forces that threaten to weaken us in life. Unless one is householder, one cannot be a saint. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji believed that family provides a training ground to enable us to face the big world outside. He accepted to some extent a family role even though his was a life of renunciation and detachment. Adjustment, a basic principle of family, makes all social life run smoothly. And without adjustments there will be severe tension at all times. The institution of marriage provides an opportunity to live life to the fullest. We are told to enjoy, and sail in the ocean of life but do not sink in it. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji used to say a worldly man too can be a man of dispassion. He seemed to delight in a wedding ceremony and gladly used his power to make marriages successful. But he was adamant in not taking up persons for higher realisation until they gave up sex. Family and friends we love enable us to experience divine love. Divine love is bliss. It is an admitted fact that some amount of anger is needed to increase productivity. Since it is also an important emotion, therefore, it should not be misused. Love is an essential component of spirituality. Love is the key to realize oneness of entire creation. Spirituality is extremely important as it gives us control of our senses and helps remain steady. It improves us day by day. Spirituality is what teaches one to view oneself as a being rather than an object. Love is a subject without an end. Every individual is a bundle of love as taught by Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. Neurologists tell us that the neuron which is the basic unit of the brain has been created by God for love. Spiritual people definitely tend to handle pressure more patiently and logically.

Before the USSR exercised her veto power in the UN Security Council for the first time in favour of India, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji gave those present before him in Srinagar (Kashmir) an idea of the debate as it was progressing and, occasionally, spoke in Russian, a language he had never studied. Assuredly it was an indication of his spiritual intervention. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji has said, "World harmony depends on a globally interconnected network of light

among sacred places and groups of people without regards to nationality or religion." He healed the sick, multiplied food, altered weather, read the thoughts of people, appeared in different places at the same time and brought spiritual growth to seekers. Philip Simpfendorfer of Australia during his sojourn in Kashmir in 1975 recalled the Saturday when his daughter Helen was to marry Peter. The sky was overcast and the clouds threatening. It had started raining from the previous day. He went to his room and prayed to Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji to take care of the happiness of the children, as it was an open-air wedding. Immediately the clouds dispersed and there was bright sunshine till the function lasted. As his predominant characteristics were benevolence and compassion, his ability in the realm of causes was used to benefit all. He was the King who opposed the malignant forces disrupting the country. To the devotees Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is a live entity. They address him in the first person and have unshakable faith that he is at every *puja sthal* (place where Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is worshipped).

Praying to and meditating on Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji – splendid and adorable - at as many points on earth as possible will go a long way in turning people's minds away from violence and moral corruption. The true nectar of the mind lies in propagating the bits and bites of information on the art of truthful living to the world at large. The harmonizing effect of an individual's positive activity can spread to the community, nation and the world. When we experience God's love and help others to experience the same, every organ in our body will function to its optimum level by distancing our attitudes from anger and depression.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is a glory to the entire world. In his physical frame he visited pilgrimage centers, now he makes pilgrimage centers. His words have become scriptures. His utterances have become great mantras with the power of entering our hearts and bringing about desired transformation. His is a silent revolution. He is for spiritual awakening for one and all. The faithful recitation of his Divine Name in meditation teaches us to turn our attention

away from the ego and learn to live in the present moment. We have to learn to be patient. Patience is predicated on the faith that God knows better than we ever can hope to know what is good for us. God does not stand aside when we abuse our freedom and cause disequilibrium in society. He winds up the cause and sets the world on the right track. For attaining balance we ought to do the right thing, at the right time, in the right way, for the right reason and with the right intention. It is the silence that can still the mind. It will awaken the supreme within us. In silence we can meditate and can communicate with God. Our mind should be able to be light and alert. To still the mind, we need meditation. We should be able to change our attitude in case world demands it, as we cannot expect the world to change. The pure consciousness is the destination of love that arises from the dissolution of delusion. As Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is the holder of thirty six elements from Shiva to the earth, we are safe under him. Our personal efforts and his grace will take us across the three worlds and he will enable us to perceive the supreme consciousness. He acts as magnet to draw us to God and we have to become people who can extract love and who can give love in all situations. For living a successful life we should strengthen ourselves to overcome obstacles and not give in to failure. It is our unconditional love and acceptance by Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji that make us feel safe with others. We have to remain clung to the lotus feet of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji in our heart. He is the remover of six types of distresses. His silent message is to turn to Shrimad Bhagavad Gita for light and guidance.

We need to repeat *Aham Brahmasmi,* I am God and it will materialize one day after it is firmly established in our mind. The mind is the maker of human fate. Bad things are to be dissuaded sternly and good things persuaded heartily. God is in love, goodness and service. In serving ourselves we should not forget others, who are in need of our service. Love from within us radiates towards everybody and manifests as spontaneous service. True joy can be experienced through devotional love, imbibed from Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. Without devotees imbibing the core values of

Bhagavaan consciousness there is little hope of it becoming our way of life. We can have peace through concentration upon any of the items lying at the Sanctum Sanctorum of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji as an antidote to the social fabric. Meditation is a process of shedding the ashes. Light manifests itself in a man who succeeds in removing the ashes and has mature and responsible thinking. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is the manifest Lord. He is the incarnation of the *Sat-Chit-Anand* (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute).

Any article that has been touched by Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji has become infused with his spiritual vibrations. To hold that thing with reverence and faith is to draw blessing from it. Such endowments are primarily vehicles for his consciousness; those must be kept alive. The disciples alone can transmit the Guru's actual spiritual touch, depending on the degree of their attunement with him. In this way high spiritual vibrations can be passed down through generations of disciples and create a spiritual legacy that may last for centuries. Our *pariwar* (family consisting of all devotees of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji wherever they may be) has emerged as a power house; the celebration of heritage day on 3 July will give it greater soundness, strength and confidence in the international relationship. Bhagvaan Ji loves us with an unconditional love that welcomes us into the family regardless of how messed up we are. It is wisest to concentrate the mind on the present moment as nothing is worth than "this day". Live today because it is all you have. The Divine spirit will give us greater powers if we will strive after the spiritual and endeavour to attune our heart to Divine infinite love. We feel solace in the premises of a temple as the spiritual energy there uplifts our consciousness. God is everywhere but in places of worship an individual is able to rise in his consciousness sufficiently to be able to feel His presence, because of the rich vibrations. Our love should be free from boundaries. Then we settle down, nothing more is needed. All of us have a responsibility to do our best at all times. Every one is important on this earth. We are all part of God. When we serve others, we honour the divinity in everyone. To cultivate this attitude we have

to go through meditation. Once we see the light of God within, we become a part of divinity and give strength to others. We recognise that God is the moving force. The life force is triumphant and love overcomes fear. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji spreads his light always in the new places. He is quite awake to the inherent urge of the realiser to procure for him the tools which are palatable to the realiser. Every home of devotee is a temple in his honour. Wherever there is a group of devotees they choose a common place to assemble at that place, sing hymns, offer *aarti* (waiving of light before the image of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji), perform *homas* (offering of oblations into a fire built according to scriptural injuctions), chant the mantra "Om Namo Bhagavate Gopinathaya" and organize sessions of meditation.

Society to day is changing at a rapid pace and we must be in tune with the realities. We cannot remain behind the time. There is no shortage of destructive people who seek to destroy other and in the process destroy themselves, but at the same time there are signs of love and life everywhere that are constantly enabling us to overcome setbacks. The greatest service to God is the simple expression of divine live. Courage, faith and devotion finally lead us to divine love. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is *Sarvato Mukha*, the witness of universal dive play known as *lila*. The fuller power of knowledge is experienced by Bhagavaan Gopinath ji. Divinity administers the three worlds for maintaining balance. It is the *Kali* (one of the ten names of the Divine Mother) *aspect* of Divinity with ten legs and the ten faces looking constantly towards the ten directions for stability, peace and prosperity. For healing of our mind, concentration, cheerfulness and meditation are to be cultivated without any delay.

I have by personal experience observed that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is in my heart, all my bondages get shattered and all my problems get solved time and again. Our obeisance to Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, who is *Sanatana*, the Eternal, the universal mind reflected in the universal consciousness. It is changeless without

any mutation. When things don't go my way and the road ahead is hard and long, I look within. I find inside me is the strongest form of energy by chanting *Aum Namo Bhagavate Gopinathaya* and win the toughest battles. The faithful recitation of the word teaches us to turn our attention away from the ego and learn to live here in the present moment. And we will experience a fullness of life that liberates us from fear.

The whole world of Sri Guru Maharaj (spiritual teacher) is suffused with beauty. We can encounter beauty in every aspect of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji: his lips, face, eyes, smiles, gait, words, acts, dress, stance, walk, wandering, etc. Each of these traits is charming to the *bhakta* (devotee). Word "God" is a source of energy in my life and Sri Guru Maharaj is the physical representation of God. "Today" is a moment that never was before. Therefore, to be realistic you have to set yourself free of the old mind that holds you back. Your love for Guru Pariwar should be expressed in the best possible manner. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji said that the Bhagavadgita is his guru. He is the *karma yogi* (one who performs selfless actions) as described in the Bhagavadgita. He is absorbed in the *Laya Yoga* as is the nature of Mahadeva. He is the bestower of the *sarvagnanya* which is the synthesis of the total consciousness. His message is to go beyond hypocrisy and ritualism. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is life giver and sustainer. He encourages us to reject the negative and connect with the positive. Whenever we accept and act, it is a positive experience. The optimism and balance does not encounter nor is affected by blocks. For harmony and peace we should take the flame of Bhagavaan Gopinath ji to various parts of the world. As propounded by him, we have to identify ourselves with the whole creation and be extremely sweet and sacrificial to all fellow beings. We have not to be static. We must progress by following the example of flowing rivers. In stagnation there is decay, disease and death. No obstacles should stop our movement. In our *sadhana* (spiritual practices) just become a child and growth keeps on happening. Life is so vast that it includes all contradictions in its fold. Differences add spice to life. But we should stand for

transformation and growth. The pre-requisite formality of having drunk in the magnetic personality of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji or having seen him in flesh and blood can be easily dispensed with, as has been the case with all such divine manifestations like Bhagavaan Rama or Bhagavaan Krishna. When we operate from innocence, our understanding becomes divine. Shedding of individual centric thinking qualifies us for intuitive reality.

In the Bhagavadgita it is said that "there is no fall for him either here or hereafter who works for the good of others". Death and renewal go on side by side relentlessly. Spirituality helps one to understand the essence of things. Meditation, reading and listening to devotional music gives us spiritual nourishment. We should not be overwhelmed by grief. We need to develop the qualities of strength, wisdom and hope. Prayer is an unfailing moral weapon – complete and effective to fight adversities of the inner and outer worlds. God often answers prayers. He listens and answers the call of a pure soul. For effective and sensible functioning of a human being, one has to enhance his perception beyond the five senses, because spirituality is an inner process. We have to anchor ourselves firmly in righteousness and lead a life of pure bliss. A sense of detachment helps us to realize the transitory nature of life and keeps us aware of the futility of living in ignorance. A sense of detachment channelizes our physical and mental energies and stimulates our progress in both the physical and spiritual world. Bhagavaan Gopinath ji has realized the supreme Lord and imparts the self-effulgent knowledge to other who submit to Lord and him. We should have firm faith that by serving him we serve all. Of the nine forms of devotion *nama sankirtan* (congregational chanting of the Divine Name) is the best. Therefore, take absolute shelter and pray to Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. He has come to rescue all and give the highest Krishna *prema* (love) to all. We have to remember that sincere love will never get deceived. Showing the path of eternal welfare to aspirants is the great service of Lord. True Guru remains hidden and yet carries on the work of the whole world as *Jagat Guru* (world-preceptor). We have to thank Guru Maharaj repeatedly for giving us the strength to keep going.

'Gospel' is the latest effort of Jagat Guru Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji Foundation to concretize the facts, regarded as definitely true after the genuine study. This treatise is covering the multi dimensional facets of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's benign personality and sound judgment. It is to preserve the facts about the various unfathomable facet of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, elucidated by the notable writers. The Jagat Guru Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji Charitable, Research Foundation is greatly thankful to the eminent writers, viz. Sri Triloki Nath Dhar 'Kundan', Dr. Chamanlal Raina, Lt. Col. R. K. Langar, Prof. V. N. Drabu, Dr. Roshan Saraf, Prof. A.N. Dhar, Sri Bal Krishan 'Sanyasi', Sri Ashwani Kaul and others, who offered their humble tribute to Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji in the form of writing for this book. It is the labour of love for the authors and unknown facts simplified for the admirers of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. Sri T.N. Dhar, 'Kundan', a voracious reader and a writer of repute, is the editor of this volume. He is a highly blessed *sadhaka* (one who is striving toward perfection in spiritual life) of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji as proved by his dedication to make the present publication possible after writing earlier, *The Saint Extraordinary, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji (His Life and Message)*. May Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji bless him and every one who has contributed in one way or the other to make the present book a reality. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji has stressed to hold on to truth. There is no virtue equal to truth and no sin greater than falsehood. Truthful persons are kind, compassionate, childlike and loving. They are honest, straightforward, sincere and wise. The negative feeling like crookedness, falsehood and impurity should be abhorred at the outset. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji considers all the people of *pariwar* as his disciples who love one another and are devoted for the service of the needy irrespective of caste, creed, colour and sex.

A *sadhaka* has to vow for his sustained application and perseverance towards success. 'Guru Maharaj' becomes everything for the evolved devotee. All things that we perceive are his *lila* (divine play). He is embodiment of love and compassion. Great tides of love pulsate in slow rhythms of light and roaring, ever

creating, ever sustaining, coming from everywhere, going everywhere. Bhagavaan Gopinath ji is wonderfully superb. It would be better to be silent and be simply a mirror to reflect some of his fullness. He is with his energies available to the aspirants for lending a helping hand. The aspirant by imbibing Shiva consciousness brings Shiva Shakti together and forges cosmic creation within by the grace of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji.

God pervades everything. Bhagavaan Gopinath ji has said not to discriminate between people of different religions. This is the reason that the people of various faiths, viz. Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christians, etc. were received by Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji alike. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is the force, which enables one to attain perfection in perceiving the Supreme Consciousness. He has been an apostle of silence. He spoke very little. But whatever he spoke was rich with sublime values and guided his devotees on both the worldly and spiritual life. Bhagavaan Gopinath ji believed that silence is God. Life is a journey. We should live a clean life that flows from authentic living. It will link you with hope that comes from serving others and make you hopeful that you have found the living God.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji encourages us to serve the needy as best as we can. In the larger interest of community building we have to contribute our mite without any further waiting. The interconnectedness of life can be felt only by a compassionate heart which would see beyond misconceptions and limitations of thought mind. On the pathways of life we come face-to-face with difficulties and danger, disease and death. We feel frightened. Here we have to seek refuge in the supreme and trust Bhagavaan Gopnath Ji entirely. The chanting of soul-satisfyting Mantra of *Om Namo Bhagavate Gopinathaya* will draw us closer to God. Sumitra Nandan Pant, Poet Laureate, has described Bhagavaan Gopinath ji in the lineage of Lord Rama, Bhagavaan Krishna and Mahatma Buddha in a poem written by him on the saint. Commemorative postal stamp of Rs. 3/- was released by the Government of India, Department

of Posts during the birth centenary celebration of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji on July 3, 1998 at the FICCI Auditorium, New Delhi. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's life has been a curious blend of knowledge, devotion and action. His splendor and light keeps on spreading farther and wider with each passing day, as more facts about him get revealed. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is ponderable through mind by all those aspirants who are firmly absorbed in Supreme Consciousness. He is pleased by all masters of speech by their precious sayings. He exercises a spiritual power unequalled since the time of Jesus Christ.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is a bestower of all comforts to those who take his refuge. He is remover of all mental and physical ailments. He enriches the faith of the Supreme in the hearts of all his devotees. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is the bestower of all the best merits on his devotees, even if they cannot approach him because of their ignorance. Since he wants to involve genuine *sadhakas* into spiritual life, therefore, he helps them on compassionate grounds in particular and for world harmony in general. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji cured people of incurable diseases without any publicity. He would reprimand people for mentioning it publicly or with a fanfare. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji gives confidence and strength to every person of Sri Guru *pariwar* to act as a single person 'army' for fulfilling the commitments of a true devout. For life energy to move in a direction, commitment is essential. The more responsibility we take, the more power will come to us. The greater the commitment, the greater is the power we are bestowed by nature to fulfill that commitment. Life can be very sweet when it is made of dreams and fond imaginations. Dreams are the substance of life all around us. It is our nature to be most sacred and for achieving this state all our activities should be directed towards the Supreme. We are persuaded that harmony is a door which opens towards the divine. Nature created a human form and we have to become human beings.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji had caught me young, a player of toys. I remained playing with water while coming from Srinagar to Tullamulla Kashmir (Khir Bhawani, Shrine) in the House boat in which Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was travelling, around the year 1947. He has been a source of strength for the society and a beacon light to all humanity. On July 26, 1997 a function was held at Govinda Mandir on Newark Avenue in Jersey City, New Jersey (U.S.A.) as part of his birth centenary celebration. In a gracious gesture the Mayor of New Jersey proclaimed the day as Jagad Guru Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji day.

May Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji help us all to move from the periophery towards the "Supreme" by whatever path the present levels of our evolution demand!

**Pran Nath Koul**
Chief Patron
R/o H.No. 1745, Sector-23,
HUDA, Gurgaon, Haryana-110017

# To Our Readers

Some devotees thought that it was not only proper but also desirable and in the interests of all of us to have a document detailing what Bab Bhagavaan preached and stood for, what qualities he wanted us to imbibe, what path he wanted us to tread upon and what guidelines he prescribed for us to enable us to rise to the level of divinity. I was asked to draw a framework of the proposed document, which I did to the best of my meager knowledge and understanding of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's teachings. Various scholars, knowledgeable persons and devotees of the saint were approached and the topics suggested to them to write upon. They selected the topics of their choice and were kind to pen down their thoughts and the teachings of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji as they had understood and assimilated those. We are grateful to all of them for sparing their time and contributing their valuable papers for this compilation. We are equally grateful to Sri Tish Malhotra, who has painstakingly given this book the final shape in a professional manner.

The first nine chapters of this compilation comprise articles on various subjects, which are in the form of the secrets of life, spirituality and human existence for which Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, in his own distinct way, had suggested some guidelines, hinted at the path to be taken and pointed to the means of liberation. These subjects relate to the conduct of the common man in his mundane and spiritual capacity both. The tenth chapter covers personal experiences of some of his devotees and thinkers in relation to his life and teachings. These are sure to benefit one and all and, therefore, are collectively captioned as "For the Good of Mankind".

All these chapters collectively are in the nature of the Gospel of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, who is rightly referred to as Jagat Guru or the preceptor of the world. He had a world view of the tenets of human existence. These are, therefore, applicable to everyone irrespective of caste, creed, faith, religion or gender. We fervently

hope that our esteemed readers will benefit by reading these chapters and the message of Bab Bhagavaan conveyed through these articles. The effort put in by our learned writers, who have contributed to this volume, will bear fruit if the book helps our readers to put into practice all that was taught by the saint and has been explained and analysed in these chapters.

Without the grace of Bab Ji it would not have been possible for us to compile this volume. I would, therefore, submit to him that *Twadiyam vastu Govinda tubhyam eva samarpaye:* "This belongs to you alone and is offered to you only."

T.N. Dhar 'Kundan'
Editor

# CHAPTER I

# GOSPEL OF BHAGAVAAN GOPINATH JI

Although the word 'Gospel' is used to refer to the life and message of the Christ the dictionary meaning of the word is 'Truth'. The Vedas say that "Truth is one and the wise describe it in different ways" *(Ekam Sat viprah bahudhah vadanti)*. It follows, therefore, that when we talk about the gospel of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, we want to know how he has described the Universal Truth and which aspects he has laid emphasis on. The beauty of Bhagavaan Gopinath ji is that he has described the truth in the simplest form. He has said in very simple Kashmiri words, "*Amar chha maran?*" which means "Does the immortal die?" He has stated that the Brahman (the Absolute Reality) is immortal, we as His constituents are immortal and the entire creation, as His manifestation is immortal. The rest follows. If everything is immortal, the life is beginningless and without an end. There is no death. Everything is real. There is no illusion. There are no compartments, no barriers and no divisions. That is why he says that all religious and spiritual organizations should unite and combine their actions to serve mankind. He has made it explicitly clear that world harmony depends on a globally inter-connected network of light among sacred places and groups of people without regard to nationality or religion.

Holy men do perform some miracles on some occasions. Such sages and saints do not need to make a show of their spiritual levels nor do they need any certificate from anyone. That is why when some outsider wanted to know Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's spiritual position from his disciple he himself intervened to quote this *shloka* from the Gita:

*"Na tad-bhasate suryah na shashanko na pavakah,*
*Yad-gatva na nivartante tad-dhama paramam mama:*

"My supreme abode is such that no Sun illumines that,

"Nor the Moon, nor even fire. No body returns on reaching that abode."

Thus, it is clear in my view that the miracles are of secondary importance only and should be quoted in our writings about the holy persons only when the situation so demands. At all other times we should give more prominence to their mission and messages. Every holy person during his lifetime has a twin mission of spiritual attainment for himself and spiritual upliftment of those who seek guidance from him. Of course, there are exceptions. Some of these sages take birth only for re-establishment of righteousness, *dharmasansthapanarthaya.* They have already reached the pinnacle of spirituality where their consciousness is one with the universal consciousness and they have descended for the benefit of the humanity at large. I am neither competent nor would I venture to categorize Bab Bhagavaan on this score. Suffice it to say that he had a mission to show us the correct path to attain the truth. He used to say that for this we need two things, our own effort and the Divine grace. My own view is that if we start our journey in the right direction and begin putting in our effort, the Divine grace will follow. What is essential is our sincerity and perseverance. After all, as the Chinese saying goes, for any journey we have to take the first step.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's gospel is simply that we should try to know this Supreme Truth. He has prescribed a twin path of service (*seva*) and spiritual discipline (*sadhana*) for the realization of this Supreme Truth. Service can be rendered individually and collectively both, but the spiritual discipline is specific to every individual. For this Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji says there should be an effort on the part of an individual coupled with the Divine grace. Without these two elements spiritual upliftment is impossible to achieve. His own life has been an epitome of simplicity and dogged perseverance. There was no ostentation. There was no effort to create a sect. He commanded respect because he gave respect to every contemporary sage in Kashmir. He visited shrines and pilgrim

centres because he knew that people would follow his example and this would inspire them and induce them to walk on the path of spirituality. Of course, he performed miracles too for relieving his devotees of their suffering, but that was an expression of his compassion and kindness. Himself he seems to have experimented with a variety of spiritual methods and attained the Truth through each one of them. He used to worship the Saturn and this practice of his has been explained by Patrizia Norelli Bachelet at length. According to her, Saturn rules Capricorn, the planetry ruler of India. Saturn has been equated with Chronos, the Time-spirit or Shiva in his Mahakal form. Thus, the planet is central to destiny and that is why Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji propitiated this planet. His Australian devotees believe that he was a link between the large planetary Devas (gods) and human beings. They are of the view that in earlier part of his life Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji visited sacred sites to live with and communicate with the Devas, the spirits and the Gods of each location. Be that as it may.

He has prescribed a code of conduct for us in order to achieve this Supreme Truth. Again this he has put in three simple Kashmiri words, *sezar, pazar, shozar* or rectitude, truthfuless and purity. This is in a nutshell what the Bhagavadgita has said in detail about the divine traits (*daivi sampada*) that are expected of us all. He has emphasized both knowledge (*jnana*) and devotion (*bhakti*). That is why he would often make a mention of and quote from the Gita and the Panchastavi. The former is a quintessence of knowledge contained in the Upanishads and Brahmasutra and the latter is a blend of knowledge and devotion unto the Supreme in His Mother form.

We all know from our personal knowledge and from the information given by those who had close contact with him that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was a saint of few words. He did not communicate too much directly with people. Even then some noble persons have kept note of some golden words that have come from his mouth. They were fortunate to remain at his lotus feet for

hours on end and doubly fortunate to hear him prescribe certain duties and qualities for us and give us guidance that will stand us in good stead all through our life. His message is that we must be truthful, forthright and pure in thought, word and deed. This is a challenging task and here again we have to put in our effort and seek the Divine grace. In these days of real Kaliyuga (the 'dark age' of quarrel and hypocrisy) it may be very difficult to lead a pious and truthful life, but it is not impossible. Some writer has made a very meaningful statement about the contemporary world. He says, "In Kaliyuga men turn from the total to the fragmentary, from the profound to the superficial and from the spiritual to the material – at an ever-increasing pace until mankind reaches the final cataclysmic end." Yet saints like Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji give us hope and save us from this cataclysmic end by showing us the way to the Eternal Truth.

At some point he has emphasized the importance of self-realization and experiencing the Divine in the form of *Omkara* (the most sacred word of the Vedas). *Pranava* (the sound of OM heard by the aspirant in deep meditation) for him is the seed syllable, representing Brahman in His totality. He has pooh-poohed bookish knowledge and laid stress on that knowledge which is experienced by strict and austere spiritual methods. He was an embodiment of *Sanatana Dharma* (the eternal religion) in its essence. Such is the vastness of this way of life that it has recognised the efficacy and relevance of *saakaara* or the Divine with form, *nirakaara* or the Divine without form, *saguna* or the Divine with attributes, *nirguna* or the Divine without attributes as also of rituals. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji has accepted all these. In his symbolic *chillum* (the clay pipe that sadhus use to smoke) and *dhooni* (the sacred fire for oblation) he has practised the Vedic ritual *homa*. He has at different times made it possible for his devotees to see the Divine in His different forms. Shiva, Sharika, Rajnya. His ecstatic postures have shown his attachment to the formless Divine as well. He has pointed to *Shabda Brahma* (the sound-form of Brahman) by giving prominence to the seed syllable 'Omkara'. He was a sage whose

message is for the entire mankind without any demarcation of caste, creed, religion, region or the like. He was of the opinion that all paths lead to the same Truth but believed that every devotee has to select a path best suited to his acumen and spiritual level. In the process he wanted all spiritual bodies to unite their efforts for the emancipation of mankind.

Truth is a very tricky and complicated word. It is abstract but deep in meaning. It is indefinable yet very obvious. It is existence that is ever and everywhere the same. It is consciousness, which can be perceived by coming on to the same wavelength on which it is. It is bliss, which can be experienced and not described. There is a Pauranic story about Ashtavakra. His father was a great scholar and so was he. Once there was a debate in the king's court about the truth and the winner was to get a certain number of milking cows with gold horns as the prize. Ashtavakra, as the name indicates, had eight deformities in his body. His father was one of the contestants in the debate. Somebody informed him that his father was about to be defeated. Hearing this he rushed to the court of the king. When he entered the room, where the debate was on, all participants including the king burst into laughter. His father kept his cool but Ashtavakra himself laughed to his fill. The king was surprised. He asked him why he was laughing while all those present were laughing at him. He replied that he was laughing since he observed that leather workers were debating the essence of truth. The king wanted him to elaborate his observation. He pointed out that all those present saw only his outer skin, which was nothing but leather. They missed the true *atman* (the self) behind this skin and, therefore, he thought they were leather merchants and were not competent to debate the truth.

There is a similar story in the history of our country. The writer of the famous poetical work *Padmavat Khand*, Malik Muhammed Jayasi too was deformed bodily. He once went to the court of a Khilji King, who ruled India those days. The king could not control himself and gave a big laughter on seeing the deformed

poet. Spiritual as Jayasi was, he immediately retorted, *Mo ko hasahu, hasahu kumarahi:* "Why are you laughing at me. I am only a pot. Why don't you laugh at the potter (meaning God), who has made me like this with all this deformity?" The king was ashamed at his folly and begged forgiveness. The idea conveyed in both these anecdotes is that the outer appearance is not the reality. The intrinsic quality and essence of an individual is what connotes the truth. It is this truth that our Bab Bhagavaan was always hinting at and asking us to seek and pursue. The outer appearance is gross and the intrinsic truth is subtle.

As in the case of many other sages and savants, the essence of the gospel of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is that we should be the seekers of the truth. The Bhagavadgita has classified various categories of seekers, worshippers and spiritual practitioners at different places in different contexts. At one place it says that four types of devotees worship God, *aarta*, a person in distress; *jijnasu*, a person eager to know; *artharthi*, a person in quest of wealth; and *jnani*, a person of good knowledge. Among them, it says, the person of knowledge is the superior most: "*Tesham jnani vishishyate.*" At another place the Gita says that God considers a person of good knowledge as His own self: *"Jnani tu aatmaiva me matam."* This classification is real in certain cases but only peripheral at other places. No doubt, a worship in order to seek mundane fruits cannot be equated with a worship to seek knowledge. Similarly, the worship to seek liberation cannot be compared with the worship to gain knowledge. Even then, worship, *per se,* is a spiritual act and has to be applauded and appreciated.

There are certain classifications, which are made to make intricate things more understandable, although basically they are one and the same and different faces of the same coin. Take the case of the Supreme *Ishwara* (Brahman). We describe Him as *Sat, Chit, Ananda* or Existence, Awareness and Bliss Absolute. We cannot have awareness of something that does not exist. So the existence and the awareness are correlated. Once we are aware of the existence

only then do we experience bliss. Thus, in effect the three appellations are one and the same; only the emphasis is on a specific aspect. We know that the *jnani*, as described in the Bhagavadgita, seeks knowledge but knowledge of what? The answer is that he seeks the knowledge of the existence for the existence itself is truth. So he is after the *Sat* or existence aspect of the Supreme.

Now let us take the case of a *yogi* (an aspirant going through a course of spiritual discipline). With the help of his *yoga sadhana* (spiritual discipline to link oneself with the Supreme) he seeks merger or the awareness of oneness with the Lord. So he is after the *Chit* or awareness aspect of the Supreme. After all even Sri Krishna is referred to as *Yogeshwara* or the Master of *yoga*. And the *yogi* seeks the awareness of his unification with the Supreme. *Yoga* in itself is yoke or the joining of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul. When we talk of a *bhakhta* or the devotee, he is not concerned with any doctrine, any philosophical dogma or any spiritual principles. He has unwavering faith in his Beloved Lord and is concerned solely with surrendering before Him. This gives him the highest form of happiness and satisfaction called bliss. He is, therefore, after the *ananda* or bliss aspect of the Lord. Thus, we have seen that all the three, *jnani* (the knower of Truth), *yogi* and *bhakta* (devotee of God) seek the same Supreme but look at Him from their own individual angles and lay emphasis on different aspects of the Lord.

The Lord has three other appellations as well. These are *Satyam, Shivam* and *Sundaram*. The first one means the truth and the truth is that, which exists. Again here the *jnani* or the knowledgeable is concerned to explore the truth of His existence. The second appellation means that which is beneficial and good for the entire creation. The *yogi* seeks awareness of this beneficial aspect or the *Shiva Tatva* of the Lord. He knows that once he becomes aware of that he will cease to exist and will be one with Lord and in a position to declare, *Shivo-ham, Shivo-ham, Shivo kevaloham:* "I am the Shiva, I am the Shiva; only Shiva I am." As

regards the *bhakta*, he is there to surrender unto Lord. He loves and adores Him and he is mad after His dazzling beauty. He concentrates on His beauty, gets lost in it and like Meera expresses his sentiments in these words *Mero to Giridhara Gopal doosro no koi:* "Mine is only Gopal and none else." He yearns and longs to have a glimpse of His radiance.

This Supreme Lord is described as *Upadrashta, Anumanta, Bharata, Bhokta, Maheshwara.* He keeps a close watch on us, on our thoughts, on our utterances and on our actions. Should we seek guidance from Him, He grants us permission to think, speak and act in a particular manner. For those who surrender unto Him, He is the Supreme Master, the supplier and enjoyer. The devotee is not bothered about anything. He says to his Lord, *Janmani santu mama Deva Shatadikani...... kintu kshanardham-api twat charanarvindat ma paiyatu hridayam me Isha namo namase:* "Let me have hundreds of births but give me the only boon that my heart should not lose sight of your holy lotus-like feet even for a fraction of a second."

After reading the entire Srimad Bhagavatam one realizes that the bottom-line is that there are only two types of seekers. The first type is that who uses his brain, reasoning and logic and argues at every step in order to have a clear view of the path to be taken. Such a seeker is represented by Arjuna. He is an intellectual who asks questions, seeks answers and clarifications for every doubt and every intricate stipulation made by Sri Krishna. We cannot fault him for this attitude because he is an intelligent seeker using his brain. He wants to be clear about what he perceives, what he sees and what he is asked to do. The second type is one who has surrendered before the Lord and has left his life in His hands. He is like a *gopi* (simple milkmaid devotee of Lord Krishna), who is not bothered about the logic or reasoning. He says like the *gopis, Udhav, man nahin das bees, ek huto so gayo shyam sang:* "Udhav, we do not have multiple minds. We had one and that has gone with Sri Krishna."

For both these types of seekers the body, the mind, the heart and the intellect are the instruments to achieve their goal and reach their destination. In Katha Upanishad the body has been likened to a chariot. The intellect is the charioteer, the sense organs are the horses drawing it and the mind represents the reins with which these horses are kept under control and are put on the right track. We need these instruments to be used to seek the ultimate truth.

We claim to be the devotees of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. We recite his name, pour oblations of his different names in the sacred fire and sing in his praise. We remember him on his birth anniversary and on his *nirvana* (leaving the mortal coil) day. We have established *ashrams* (centres for spiritual practices) in his name where his *murthis* (images - sculpted, carved or painted) have been installed for the devotees to perform *puja* (worship). All this will be justified if we imbibe all the qualities that he has prescribed in our thoughts, words and deeds. All this will be meaningful and purposeful if we adopt a spiritual discipline best suited to our psyche and devote our lives in the service of the needy and under-privileged. All this will carry conviction if we invoke God's grace through him and put in our sincere efforts to know the Truth in its totality. For this we have to study the gospel of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, understand it in letter and spirit and then practise it in our day-to-day life. If we are sincere in our efforts and firm in our resolve, he will surly guide us on the right path and thus help us achieve the Supreme Truth.

There is a clear indication from the life and message of our Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji that his main concern was the welfare of mankind and global peace and harmony. His gospel, therefore, is universal and not specific to a group of individuals. He has recognized the importance of all religious luminaries, the relevance of all faiths and the paramount significance of various spiritual organization and missions. He saw all these as beacon lights that can illuminate the lives of mankind in every possible way. He saw no conflict in their aims and objectives and wanted that all activities

of such organizations be pooled together. Their focus should be to liberate humankind of all the darkness of ignorance. Their activities should be to counter the forces of vice and sin, elements of discard and friction and the devils of doom. They need to work together and bring about understanding, harmony, brotherhood and unity among various groups. This will not only ensure establishment of universal love and fellow feeling but also bring happiness to one and all and eradicate hatred and malice.

During his lifetime Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was available to his disciples and devotees in person. They would rush to him and seek guidance from him to their problems, both mundane and spiritual. They would spend hours, days and months in his proximity and catch the essence of every word and every sentence spoken by him and try to find the message in every gesture of his. Even now when he is not embodied, there are chosen few, who perceive him in thoughts, dreams and imagination and sometime even have a glimpse of his appearance. They also are favoured with the solution to their problems and get the right lead from him. For all of us, however, a treasure of words of wisdom left behind by him is there for us to benefit from. All that is needed is what he used to call *vichar* or contemplation in order to understand it, put it into practice and achieve the goal. It should not be difficult for a devotee of his with unflinching faith in him to invoke his presence any time. He will be there to steer the boat of our life in the right direction and lead us with a beacon light on the path of righteousness that will bring us liberation and emancipation from ignorance and darkness.

There is another aspect to any gospel, more so to the gospel of our Bab Bhagavaan. It is good to read scriptures and the words of wisdom of saints and savants recorded in different compilations. It is also good to listen to discourses, lectures and pronouncements of the holy men. It is equally good for us to experience in our lives and draw our own conclusions. But the important thing is to put into practice what we have heard, read, experienced and then

accepted as the truth. It is reported that once a devotee of his, sensing that some calamity was going to befall on the Kashmiri Pandit community, requested the master to save them. He was quick to retort, "Is there any *batta?*" What he meant to ask was whether we were in reality what we were supposed to be in our thought, word and deed or in name only *batta,* the exalted ones. The message is clear. We have not only to read the gospel or listen to it from the knowledgeable but we have to imbibe the qualities prescribed and practise what is required of us. The gospel must manifest in our personalities. Our conduct and behaviour should reflect it so that other devotees too could adopt it in all sincerity. Like a lamp we have not only to give light to ourselves but also light up other extinguished lamps so that the entire atmosphere is lit up with the radiance of the gospel and the darkness of ignorance is removed by our individual and collective efforts.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was aware that there are various ways of seeking the truth but each person has to choose a way best suited to his acumen, taste and ability. We are told that once he mentioned a particular person and emphatically stated that *Kundalani Yoga* (the yoga system specially designed for the awakening of the mysterious spiritual power, the cosmic energy sleeping near the base of the spine) was not his cup of tea. While the aim is the same, viz. attaining the truth, the means to attain it have to be different. It is here that the need for a preceptor arises. An accomplished preceptor has the insight to determine which particular path is best suited to a disciple of his.

T.N. Dhar 'Kundan'

## CHAPTER II

# THREE GOLDEN WORDS

The Gita says, *"Avinashi tu tad viddhi yena sarvam idam tatam. Vinasham avyaysyase na kaschit kartum arhasi:* Whatever pervades the entire creation should be viewed as immortal. No body can destroy this unchangeable entity." Even a cursory look at the life and its reality shows that while the frame is mortal, the essence hidden inside is immortal. Perhaps, that is why the Vedas enjoin upon us to be the sons of immortality, *Amritasya Putrah.* While the ultimate aim for us should be, as Swami Vivekananda says, to rise from animality to divinity, it seems necessary for us to take the first step and try to become humans first. Ghalib has rightly stated in one of his couplets that it is not easy to be human in the right sense of the term, *"Aadmi ka bhi mayassar nahin insaan hona."* For this aim of becoming human to achieve, it is necessary for us to imbibe certain qualities. The Gita has prescribed more than two dozens of specific qualities for a person to be of the divine nature. About half a dozen of these are basic qualities, which make us humane and civilized. The rest are perhaps on a higher level and can be aspired subsequently.

To be virtuous is a basic human trait and perhaps a desirable duty too. Virtue is called *guna* in Hindi/Sanskrit. Our scriptures say that virtue is respected and worshipped everywhere, *"Gunah sarvatra poojyante."* Therefore, it is enjoined upon us to earn virtues that will enable us justify our being human kind, *"Tasmat gunani arjadhvam."* It is not a debating point that we should be good human beings, good members of a society and good citizens of a nation. That makes it a paramount necessity for us to imbibe virtues and acquire qualities. Let us enumerate these qualities and identify the values that these impart to us. Our scriptures are replete with discussion on these virtues and the saints and sages, who have appeared on this planet Earth from time to time, have also thrown light on these qualities in their discourses, writings and sermons.

In olden days when a student had completed his studies a *dikshanta* ceremony was held, which may be viewed as the modern day convocation. On this day, before the student entered the fray of active life, he was administered certain oaths to guide him in the conduct of his life's struggle and make him tread on the path of righteousness. The first lesson given to him was *satyam vada*, or to be truthful and practise truth. The second direction given to him was *dharmam chara*, or to do his duty or to adopt righteousness in every way. The third one enjoined upon him to continue learning and teaching: "*Swadhyaya-pravachanabhyam na pramaditavyam*", or do not show laziness in self-study and transmitting your knowledge to others. This was followed by a prescription for the code of conduct. *Matri devo bhava, pitri devo bhava, acharya devo bhava, atithi devo bhava:* "Show due regard and respect to your mother, father, teacher and the guests and treat them as gods." These qualities if imbibed in thought, word and deed, make us humans in right sense of the term. These lead us eventually to immortality and make us 'Sons of Immortality' as ordained in the Vedas.

Let us examine the qualities prescribed by the Gita for us to be divine. We can cull out a few qualities out of this long list, which we think are essential for us to deserve being called humans. Once we adopt these, practise these and make these part and parcel of our life-styles, we can then proceed to adopt the remaining qualities in order to go higher and higher on the spiritual ladder. The basic qualities in the first batch could be listed as truth, compassion, gentleness, fearlessness, uprightness, non-violence, modesty, steadfastness, forgiveness, fortitude, and freedom from anger, malice and pride. Coming to think of it, these qualities are inclusive, interdependent and interlinked. The quality of truth is the foundation on which the edifice of all other qualities is built.

If we are true, we will, ipso facto, be fearless, upright and steadfast. The truth will give us fortitude and modesty. These in turn will make us non-violent, and free from anger, malice and pride. All this will help us develop an attitude of compassion and

kindness towards our fellow men and other creatures and we shall be humane, understanding and loving towards one and all. Love, as we know, is the corner stone of human bondage and this binds us together and brings us closer to each other. Even in Christian theology it is stated, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." Nature has given us humans a heart, which is the centre of love, a spring of compassion and kindness and an instrument of feeling and caring. Reaching this place where we are endowed with these basic qualities is not an end in itself. It is only a station en route. Many of us reach this place and knowingly or unknowingly treat it as the destination and feel satisfied. But they are blessed ones, who know the reality that there is still a long way to go. They keep their journey on and tread upon a higher plane of spiritual quest. They start imbibing the remaining qualities in order to become imbued with divine traits. This endears them to Almighty, who assures them in these words, *Sa me priyah*: "He is dear to Me."

The qualities that we have to acquire on the higher plane of spiritual quest are self-control, renunciation, tranquility, vigour, self-study, balanced demeanor, aversion to greed and fickleness, absence of the habit of finding fault with others and a well planned *jnana* and *yoga*. Let us take the last one first. This quality brings equilibrium in our knowledge and actions. *Jnana* is academic and theoretical science and *yoga* is its application. Once we create a balance in what we know and what we do, we rise further up in the ladder of spirituality. With all the qualities enumerated in the previous set, we are still living on the plane of *gunas* or the attributes. No doubt we are endowed with the attribute of light *sattva-guna*, and not those of passion and darkness, *rajoguna* and *tamoguna*, yet our goal has to be to rise to a plane devoid of all the three attributes. Even Arjuna was advised by Sri Krishna thus, *Nistraiygunya bhava. Arjuna:* "Arjuna rise above the three attributes." At this plane we are fully in control of our selves, we are firm and steadfast, we have no greed nor have we any habit of finding faults with others. Kabir has said about this situation in these words, *Bura khojana main gaya, bura mila na koi, jo man khoja aapno mujh sa bura no koi:*

"I went in search of a bad person but could not find one. When I examined my own self I found that no one was as bad as me." This gives a clear hint that we should engage in self-analysis and try to know the self. For this we must shun greed and fickleness, adopt a balanced attitude, enjoy with a sense of renunciation and be full of vigour and tranquility. *Jnana* or knowledge enables us to experience the truth of existence of *Sat*. *Yoga* on the other hand enables us to merge with the universal consciousness or *Chit*. Having thus realized the subtle truth, we are prone to surrender before the Supreme. We become an embodiment of love and attain supreme bliss, *aananda*, a position which has no antonym or opposite. That is the destination every seeker craves for and endeavours to attain. At this point the seeker says in the words of Kabir, *Jab main tha tab ve nahin, ab ve hain main nahin, prem gali ati sankari, ya mein do na samahin:* "When I was there, He was not; now He is there I am not. This lane of love is too narrow to accommodate two at a time." Even Ghalib echoes the same truth, *Na tha main to Khuda tha, main na hota to Khuda hota, duboya mujhko hone ne na main hota to kya hota:* "When I was not there God was, if I were not there God would have been. My being has drowned (ruined) me, what would happen had I not been there?" (Nothing, it would make no difference for God only would have been there.)

We are always advised to realize ourselves. We are told that our true self is not the body, mind and the intellect. Our essence is something beyond these and that is what we need to identify, seek after and realise. While this stipulation is completely true, yet we should not under-estimate the importance of these recognizable items of our existence. Our body is a vehicle, which has various senses of knowledge, deeds and perception. It is through these that we function, act and react. Our mind is a vehicle of thought. Our heart is a vehicle of feeling and compassion. Our intellect is a vehicle of discernment, discretion and discrimination. It is through these vehicles that we function and put into practice the faculties of virtues and qualities, which we are endowed with. It is because of this fact, perhaps, that there is a saying in Sanskrit, *Shariram-*

*aadyam khalu dharma-sadhanam:* "Body is the foundation stone of executing our duties."

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that it is in the nature of things that we be virtuous. Every one of us has an element of all the three attributes of truth, passion and darkness. The quality of a person depends upon which of the three elements is prominent and predominant in his personality. A person with the attributes of truth and light predominant in his nature can be taken as a true human being. Once a person rises above these attributes of lower plain and is endowed with the qualities of higher plain, he can be treated as a divine person. Once he transcends all the attributes, he realizes his self, his individual consciousness gets merged with the universal consciousness and he attains a stature where he is called the son of immortality or *Amritasya Putrah.*

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji has summed up the desirable qualities of an ideal person in three crisp Kashmiri words, *sezar, pazar* and *shozar*. Translated loosely in English, these would mean rectitude, truthfulness and purity. Sri Krishna, while enumerating *daivi sampada* or the divine qualities in Chapter XVI of the Gita has listed more than two dozen items, which include these three items also, viz, *arjavam* – straight-forwardness, *satyam* – truth, and *sattva sanshuddhih* – purity of heart. Bhagawaan Gopinath Ji has chosen these three items only either because he considered other qualities as subservient to these and, therefore, of secondary importance or he was of the view that all the other qualities prescribed in the Gita were inherent in these three primary characteristics in one-way or the other. It would be of immense help to us in our mundane and spiritual upliftment if these three qualities are analyzed, explained and elaborated so that it is easier for us to imbibe these divine qualities in our lives.

Take for example *sezar*, straight-forwardness or rectitude. This quality shapes our moral character, guides our behaviour and helps us shun all the artificiality, ostentation and falsehood. We are thus able to present ourselves in our pristine purity and true colour.

Crookedness gone from our character, we not only think right, speak right and act right but also pray to the Lord all the time to keep our intentions clean and beneficial for all, *Tan-me manah shiva sankalpam-astu:* "Let my mind be of noble resolve." We Indians have inherited a civilization, a culture and a thinking, wherein the entire world is treated as one family, *Vasudhaiva kutumbakam,* and prayers are offered for the well being of the whole creation, "*Sarve bhavantu sukhenah.*" That being so, there is no reason for us to be crooked, there is no room for artificiality and there is no need for putting on any mask. Straight-forwardness in behaviour will give us satisfaction and endear us to all we deal with. It will infuse confidence in us, in what we do and we shall be able to execute all our deeds with dexterity, excellence and aplomb. After all, it is the excellence in one's deeds that has been identified as *yoga, "Yogah karmasu kaushalam,"* B.G.II.50. It will also give us poise and balance and create harmony in our approach in the face of all the opposites like loss and gain, pleasure and pain and honour and dishonour; for the poise is yet another definition of *yoga, "Samatvam yoga uchyate,"* B.G.II.48. In short, this one single quality of *sezar* or straight-forwardness shall turn us into true yogis.

As for the second quality of *pazar,* the truth, let us first examine what it actually means. *Sat* in Sankskrit means reality or existence. The concept of reality or existence is *Satya* or the Truth. We are told that the unreal has no existence and the real never ceases to be. *"Na-asato vidyate bhavo na-abhavo vidyate satah,"* B.G.II.16. Unreal is a mirage that attracts but deceives. Unreal is a temptation that may give momentary pleasure but eventually leads to a dead end and pushes us into an abyss. Reality or the Truth is the only saviour that can steer the boat of our life safe in the ocean of the *samsara* (the world of suffering, the ceaselss round of birth and death). The Vedic prayer, *Asato ma sad-gamaya:* "lead me from falsehood to truth", is, therefore, very significant and relevant at the physical, mental and spiritual – all the three planes. According to the Bhagavadgita, *Sat* has three different connotations. *"Sad-bhave sadhu bhave cha sad-iti-etat-prayujyate. Prashaste karmani*

*tatha sachchhabdha Partha yujyate*," B.G.XVII.26. First connotation is reality, which means that Ultimate Truth, the pursuit of which should be the primary aim of our lives. That could be defined as 'Self-realization' or 'Realization of the Divine.' The second meaning is goodness, which means all that is beneficial, utilitarian and uplifting for one and all. The third purport is auspicious act, which means all those actions that are not only for name and fame but also for the welfare of self and others, *Swantah sukhaya* and *sarvantah sukhaya:* "For the pleasure of the self as also of every one else." There is no escape from the truth. Sooner or later we have to accept it, face it and adopt it. The Upanishad has proclaimed and we have adopted it as our national dictum, *Satyam-eva jayate:* "Truth alone triumphs". It has, therefore, rightly been enjoined upon us that we must tread upon the path of truth and righteousness. No wonder, in his translation of the Gita, Mr. Juan Mascara has translated the term *dharma* as the truth. The truth should not only be our motto but it should also be our nature, our habit and our duty.

The third quality of *shozar* or the purity is again very significant. It should be our endeavour to be pure in thought, word and deed. In good old days, the marble sculptors sometimes filled wax in the portions of their sculpture, which they would accidentally chip off, in order to present these pieces of art in their proper shape. Lest they got cheated, the prospective customers would ask whether these were 'sans wax.' Thus was born the English word 'sincere' meaning without wax or without deceit. Like those marble figures we should be sincere, without wax, free from any impurity. Our purity should be the purity of gold, which comes out unscathed from out of the fire and stands the test of the touchstone. A pure person has nothing to hide, nothing to fear and presents himself in his true colour. He deceives neither himself nor others. This quality of purity makes him what the Gita calls *sthita prajna* or the steadfast. Purity is one of the traits that endear a devotee to the Lord. Sri Krishna says, *Anapekshah shuchir dakshah..... Yo mad-bhaktah sa me priyah:* "A want-less person who is pure and

efficient and devoted to Me is also dear to Me." B.G. XII.16. It should be our endeavour, therefore, to be pure and maintain purity of the body by bathing and cleaning, of the mind by entertaining noble thoughts, *Aa no bhadra kratavo yantu vishvatah:* "let noble thoughts come to us from all sides", and of the soul and spirit by spiritual cleansing. Purity and piety go hand in hand. These make us kind, caring and compassionate. These generate in us fellow feeling, love and brotherhood that make us worthy human beings who cherish peace and non-injury as the cardinal principles of human existence. The three qualities collectively give us what has been described in the Gita as *Brahmi sthiti* or the Brahman-state. On attaining that state there is no bewilderment or *moha* and this state leads to merger with the Divine, *"Brahma-nirvanam."* B.G. II.72.

A human being comprises five different sheaths together forming three distinct bodies. The food-formed sheath or the *annamaya kosha* is called *sthoola sharira* or the gross body of flesh and blood. This body needs to be kept fit and healthy for the very survival, as this body is the vehicle of and the foundation for all our activities. It has, therefore, to be maintained clean and upright. So the two qualities of *sezar* and *shozar* have to be applied to this visible body. The air, mind and intellect-formed sheaths or the *pranamaya, manomaya* and *vijnanamaya koshas* together form the *sookshma sharira* or the subtle body. This is also called *Linga sharira* or the symbolic body. This body needs all the three qualities, rectitude, purity and truth in order to keep it fit and healthy. Apart from the mental rectitude and clarity we have to have intellectual purity. In addition, a truthful mental framework and a sincere intellectual set up give luster and shine to our existence. This is called *tejas* or radiance. All the three qualities of *sezar, pazar* and *shozar* are required for this hidden but vital body. Lastly we have the bliss-formed sheath or the *anadamaya kosha*, which makes the *karana deha* or the inner coating. This is very subtle and difficult to perceive aspect of human existence and this also needs all the three qualities for its spiritual health. Without these qualities there

will be no knowledge of the innermost facet of our being, no perception of the Truth, we seek to realize and no experience of the Supreme Bliss, we aim to achieve. We are told that the Divine is the embodiment of *Sat, Chit,* and *Ananda* - Existence, Consciousness and Bliss Absolute. In order to merge with the Divine and attain the absolute position of Universal 'I' ness, and experience the embodiment of these three attributes, the *quid pro quo* is to imbibe and adopt all the three qualities as enjoined upon by the Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji.

For our spiritual advancement, a number of paths have been prescribed by our sages, savants, scriptures and the exponents of various doctrines. Some paths are *riju'* or straight and some are *kutila* or involved and crooked. Yet all these lead to the same goal. In the words of Sri Pushpadanta, *Riju kutila nana patha jusham nrinam-eko gamyah:* "For all the persons treading the paths straight or crooked, the destination is the same, the Divine." Bhagavaan Gopinath has prescribed a straight path by asking us to take this three-lane road of S.P.S. The path is no doubt straight but by no means easy. The mind being what it is and given the human failings, it is very difficult to put into practice these three golden words. Even Arjuna expressed his helplessness in controlling the mind which he described as turbulnet, strong and obstinate: "*Chanchalam hi manah Krishna, pramathi balavad-dridam.*" B.G. VI.34. Even so it is not impossible to control it provided we "practise constantly and remain detached at all times": *Abhyasenu tu Kaunteya vairagyena cha grihyate.* B.G. VI.25. So the bottom line is practice and detachment. We have to strive hard to imbibe these qualities of simplicity, truth and purity. In due course these are bound to become our habit. By our inherent very nature eventually we shall be simple and straightforward in our dealings, true and clear in our word and deed and pure and clean in body and soul. Coming to think of it, in the end analysis these three qualities are one and the same and, therefore, inseparable. One cannot be truthful without being straightforward. One cannot be pure without being truthful and one cannot be straightforward without being pure. Rectitude,

truth and purity go together and may perhaps be the same feature viewed from different angles.

These qualities raise us from animality to divinity with the result that divinity is manifest in all our actions. In the words of the Veda, we become immortal persons, *Amritasya Putrah*. While enjoining upon us to inculcate these three cardinal qualities, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji had an important fact in his view. And that is that no external element except the grace of God, *Daiva-anugraha*, can help us in mundane progress or spiritual advancement. As the saying goes, the only hand that is going to help us is at the end of our own arm. The Gita also says, *uddhared-atmana:* "Let a person raise himself by his own self, let him not debase himself. For, he is himself his own friend, himself his own foe." B.G. VI.5. Keeping in view these words of the Lord, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji wants us to be our own friends and raise ourselves in stature. For this purpose only he has prescribed these three qualities to be adopted so that our development and advancement are assured. Maybe he believed that once we cultivate these we shall become deserving recipients of the Divine grace, which will help our efforts bear fruit. Blessed are those who have had personal interaction and direct spiritual contact with him during his life time, and have had the opportunity of listening to these golden words from his lotus mouth. Blessed are we all for whom Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji has left these golden words to be assimilated and implemented. Our unflinching faith in him and in all that he has said will stand us in good stead throughout our lives. This will transform our lives, guide us on the right path and lead us to our cherished sacred destination. These pronouncements of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji sound very simple but are deep in their meaning and purport. They are like pearls inside the seashells. It will be to our advantage if we break open the shell and recognize the hidden pearls. An ocean of message is hidden in these three golden words. If we realize their significance we shall know how precious and priceless they are. I was perhaps conveying the message of this great saint of Kashmir, unknowingly though, when I wrote long back in one of my verses: *Muzhab zonmut chhui*

*tshot mot tai, sezrah, pazrah, raet raet kar. Yaem yuth vow tai taem tyuth vot tai, khot tai so 'n neri dar bazaar:* "Religion for us is only this much, rectitude, truth and noble deeds. As one sows so one reaps. The pure and the impure shall be known in the market of life."

Our sages have divided our life span of hundred years in four segments of twenty-five years each. These are called *ashrama* (a stage of life, traditionally four: student, householder, forest-dweller, and renouncer). The first segment is called *brahmacharya* or the stage of celibacy and studentship. The second is known as *grihasta* or the life of householder. The third is named *vanaprastha* or forest dwelling. Forest dwelling means seclusion not necessarily physical but mental, intellectual and spiritual. During this segment of our life we are required to seek spiritual ascendancy with due regards to the actual experiences had during the previous two segments of our life. This is the period during which we can uplift ourselves spiritually and go beyond and transcend the attributes of light, passion and darkness, *satva, rajo, tamo gunas.* The fourth is the stage of *sannyasa* (renunciation). The Gita defines this term as *Kamyanam karmanam nyasam sanyasam kavayo vidhuh:* "Detachment or renunciation is to shun desire-oriented actions." During this segment we have to remain detached, preach and teach and pass on the spiritual knowledge to others in society for the benefit of humankind at large.

The three qualities prescribed by Bab are needed in all the four segments of our life. When we are in celibacy stage, we have to acquire knowledge, pursue studies and gain awareness. This pursuit demands that we are straightforward in our purpose, we are truthful in accepting our ignorance and limitations and that we are pure and without any blemish in seeking knowledge. The Gita enjoins upon us to seek and obtain education by three means, *Pranipatena, pariprashnena, sevaya:* "by surrender, by enquiry and by service." Surrender presupposes purity of heart and soul, enquiry and questioning is meaningless and futile without truth and service

cannot be rendered unless we are endowed with rectitude. Thus, it is very clear that the three qualities prescribed by our Bab are paramount and necessary for us right from the beginning of our journey of life.

When we enter the second stage of life we raise a family and earn living to bring them up. Here again we have to be true to ourselves, to our profession and to the job that brings us bread and butter. We have to be straightforward in our dealings with our fellow men in whose contact we come in our day-to-day work. We have to be clean and pure in word and deed so that we execute our duties with commitment and full involvement. These three qualities at this stage help us in conducting ourselves as responsible members of the society we belong to and as true human beings, who God has favoured with discerning intellect, compassionate heart and active organs. Third and fourth stages of life are rather spiritual in as much as the former is concerned with spiritual elevation of the self and the latter in serving others by imparting knowledge and enlightment. It goes without saying that the three qualities prescribed by our Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji are even more important during these stages of our existence and functioning as human beings. Without rectitude, truth and purity we cannot rise a centimeter spiritually, what to speak of attaining any position or height.

It is not a mere coincidence that our scriptures and the scriptures of other major faiths like Buddhism also lay stress on these three qualities in one way or the other. In Buddhism the three cardinal principles are, *Buddham sharanam gacchami, sangham sharanam gacchami, dhammam sharanam, gacchami:* "I bow to Buddha, I bow to the sangha and I bow to dharma." Buddha stands for purity, sangha stands for straightforwardness and dharma stands for truth. These principles enjoin upon the followers of this faith not to do any evil, to cultivate good and to purify the mind. Even the popular school of Brahmakumaris prescribes development of threefold feature in our existence. They want everyone to have awareness of self, others and the potential. They want everyone to

have a relationship whereby we exchange energies. Finally, they want us to have the creativity of thought and perception. Awareness is possible only by purity. Relationship develops when we are straightforward. Creativity of thought and perception presupposes truth. So that goes to show how important, unavoidable and paramount the three qualities under discussion are for our existence and for our progress both physical and spiritual.

**T.N. Dhar 'Kundan'**

## CHAPTER III

# (A) MORTAL IMMORTAL

The other day I was reading an article on Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. I came across a pithy remark made by him in the form of a question, *Amar chha maran:* "Does the immortal ever die?" I stopped reading - to ponder over this remark. What does this remark mean? Is it not obvious that what is immortal cannot die? Then what was the great saint trying to convey? It occurred to me that one does not need an extra ordinary wisdom or an above average prudence to understand that only mortals meet with death and not the immortals. One does, however, need knowledge, wisdom and understanding to figure out what is mortal and what is immortal. We have to sift grain from the chaff. The Bhagavadgita is full of assertions about the immortality of the soul in almost every chapter. *Na Jayate mriyate va kadachit, nayam bhutva bhavita va na bhuyah. Ajo nityah shashvato-ayam purano, na hanyate hanyamane sharire:* "The soul is neither born nor does it die. It does not come into being and does not cease to be. It is unborn, eternal, constant and ancient. It does not get killed when the body gets slain." B.G. II.20. The indestructibility of the soul has been brought out very lucidly in this shloka, *Na-enam chhindanti shastrani na-enam dahati pavakah. Na cha-enam kledayanti-aapah na shoshayati marutah:* "Weapons do not cleave the soul, fire does not burn it, water does not wet it nor does wind dry it." B.G.II.23. I wondered whether it was the immortal soul that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was referring to while making this remark. What about the other elements, the body, the mind and the intellect, which together with the soul constitute a being, the *jiva* (individual embodied soul)? The great Lal Ded has proclaimed, *Asi aesya tai asi aasav, asi dore kaer patavath. Shivas sori na zyon ta marun ravas sori na atagath.* "Only we there were in the past, only we there will be in the future: It is we who have been in this cycle of coming and going from time immemorial. The Divine in us, the Shiva, will never cease to be in this cycle of birth and death just as the Sun will never cease to rise and set."

Was it this "we" of Lal Ded that the Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji had in mind when he said that the immortal does not die? Did he mean to convey that we all are immortal? In order to figure this out we must try to understand what is meant by this "we" or "I", the *jiva* and whether this *jiva* is immortal. What is after all, the *jiva* or the embodied soul? It comprises the *sthoola sharira* or the gross body, the *sookshma sharira* or the subtle body and the *karana deha* or the causal body. While the gross body comprises flesh and blood, the subtle comprises breath, mind and intellect. The causal body is primitive ignorance, devoid of consciousness. This body gets destroyed when the knowledge of the real self dawns. The question that arises is whether the *jiva* is immortal in its totality or only partially in one or more of its aspects. *Jiva* is said to be consciousness defined by the principles constituting individuality. It is the embodied being limited to the psychophysical states. Doership and enjoyership are inseparable from the consciousness of duality. *Jiva* is eternal since its individuality is never destroyed in the births and deaths it undergoes. It is non-eternal, as it is transfigured in the realization of Brahman. When its limiting conditions are withdrawn, the Jeeva turns back to its source. The embodied soul is made up of five different sheaths. These are the physical or *annamaya kosha*, the vital or *pranamaya kosha*, the mental or *manomaya kosha*, the intellectual or *jnanamaya kosha* and the blissful or *anandamaya kosha*. Again the question that runs through the mind is whether one or more of these sheaths are immortal or these are collectively immortal in their totality. To identify the immortal we have to understand the nature of *jiva*. It is apparent that *jiva*, the being, *jagat*, the world and *Ishwara*, the Divine, go together and, therefore, we need to know their relationship, *per se*. If the relationship of creation and the creator is one of separate entities then their properties can be different. If, however, their relationship is that of manifestation and the one manifested, then their properties can be identical or same.

Our intellect fails to fathom this complicated riddle because our approach is through reasoning and logic. Swami Krishnananda

has observed that "logic is a proud child of duelist prejudice." If God alone is this entire world nobody can comprehend the relationship between Him and the world. It is only a *siddha purusha*, an emancipated soul like Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, who can perceive the reality and proclaim with authority that He is immortal, His manifestation is immortal and that there is nothing like death for no one dies. Science also believes that matter is indestructible. It can change its form but can neither be created nor destroyed. Even our ordinary observation shows us that everything here verily is cyclic – without a beginning and without an end. Observe the seasons: the spring, the summer, the rains, the autumn, the winter and again the spring. See the time cycle: the dawn, the morning, the noon, the evening, the dusk, the night and again the day break. Look at the nature: the seed, the sprout, the sapling, the tree and its branches, the leaves, the flowers, the fruits and once again the seed. Behold the waters, the rains, the melting snow, the brooks and rivulets, the rivers and tributaries, seas and oceans, the vapours and clouds and back to rains. The life is also exactly the same; the conception, the birth, the childhood and adolescence, the youth and old age, decay and death and then again the conception and birth. The Gita says, *Dehino-asmin-yatha dehe kaumaram yauvanam jara, tatha dehantara – praptih, dhiras - tatra na muhyati:* "The soul in this body experiences childhood, youth and old age. Likewise it crosses over to the other body and this does not delude a serene person." *B.G. II.14.* Where, then is the beginning and where is the end?

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is perhaps trying to tell us that we are all immortal and, therefore should not fear death. The Vedas have also given a clarion call to us, *Amritasya putrah*: "O Ye, Children of the immortality." We have to recognize the immortal in us. After all, the Lord has said, *Ishwarah sarva-bhutanam hrid-deshe tishthati:* The Divine dwells in the hearts of all beings." B.G.XVIII.61. According to Swami Shivananda, the self of every one bears testimony to the existence of the self, which comprehends the entire universe. The Universal self is God. Though one is

encased in this finite body, one can think and feel, 'I am infinite.' This infinite in us is Truth, Ethics and Aesthetics or 'Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram.' It is Being, Consciousness and Bliss or *Sat, Chit and Ananda*. One might ask why then can't we perceive and recognize our immortality. This query can be answered in two ways. First, the *jiva* or the individual soul has all the faculties of the Brahman, the universal soul. It can create, sustain, destroy, conceal and favour (*srishti, sthiti, samhara, pidana and anugraha*). It has all the three powers of knowledge, desire and action (*jnana, ichha, and kriya shakti*). But all these faculties in his case are circumscribed by limitations of time, space and quantum. The same faculties and powers in the Divine are unlimited. It is these limitations that limit our vision. We are able to see a being from his birth to his death only and thereby conclude that we are mortals. The Gita has explained, *Avyakta-adini bhutani vyakta-madhyani Bharata, Avyakta-nidhanani-eva tatra ka pari-devana:* "O Bharata, all beings are unmanifested in the origin, manifested in their middle state and unmanifested in their end. Where then is the cause for anguish?" B.G. II.28. We as common men fail to see beyond our gross body of flesh and blood. We think that the visible mass is the be all and end all of every thing. The source of our knowledge is only *pratyaksha* or the direct perception. Therefore, we are unable to see beyond the gross body. If we take recourse to other sources of knowledge, i.e. reason, analogy, scriptural testimony and intuition, we will be able to see our existence in its totality, perceive our true self and then realize the significance of the remark made by Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. His was a realized soul wherein the limited 'I' and the limitless 'I' had got merged. No wonder, therefore, he was seeing clearly the immortality of every being, universality and indestructibility of the soul and omnipresence and eternality of the Divine. Even a modern western philosopher G.W.F. Hegel, in his famous work, 'Logic' brings the universe within a single fold of perfection as a wholeness, which cannot brook any interference from outside. According to him, the Absolute has no outside for everything is inside it. Every thesis has an antithesis and the two get blended in a synthesis, which is a higher phase of reality in

which the lower contradiction is overcome and transcended. Everything in the universe, says Hegel, is incomplete and insufficient, and yet is the phase of Reality. Everything is to be included and nothing to be excluded, or rejected. The Absolute is the grand culmination of every process, physical, psychological and spiritual.

There is evidence galore in the scriptures that establishes oneness of *jiva* and *Brahman* (the Absolute, the Supreme Reality). It has been clarified at places that even though the *Brahman* pervades this universe yet it transcends it. The Veda says, *Tat tvam asi:* "That art Thou". *Aham Brahma-asmi:* "I am the Divine." *Ekam-eva-advitiyam:* "There is only one who is unique." In other words, it denotes merger and oneness of the subject and the object. The Purusha Sukta says, *Purusha-eva-idam sarvam…ati tishthat dashangulam*: "Everything here is God who stays higher by ten measures." Ishavasya Upanishad states, *Ishavasyam-idam sarvam yat kinchit jagatyam jagat*: "All this that is seen in this world is pervaded by the Divine." The Shaiva Acharyas of Kashmir have said, *Vishvatmikam tat-uttirnam:* "The Divine is manifested as the universe but stays above it." Sufis also have repeatedly proclaimed, *Anal-Haq:* "I am the Supreme Truth". According to Huston Smith, Hinduism considers the world multiple, that includes galaxies horizontally, tiers vertically and cycles temporally. The cycles that he has referred to indicate our belief in beginningless and endless nature and thereby immortality. Salvation, which is the aim of every seeker, is thought of in terms of the relationship of the soul to the Absolute Reality of God. In the Sankhya school the soul is released and returns to a state of pure consciousness of self. *Purusha* or eternal self is emancipated from *Prakriti* or non-self. When the soul realizes its true distinction it is no longer bounded by the world of nature and the emancipated soul is eternally freed from rebirth. Salvation is the soul realizing its own immortality. In the Advaita or the school of non-dualism the emancipated soul is identified with the Ultimate Reality, Brahman. The soul enters into mystical union with Brahman. The consciousness of the

empirical self is completely transcended. The soul realizes its true knowledge as metaphysically one with Brahman, the Divine. A Christian monk of the 5th century, Dionysius the Areopagite has this to record, "Then beyond all distinction between knower and known, the aspirant becomes merged in the nameless formless Reality, wholly absorbed in That which is beyond all things and in nothing else..... Having stilled his intellect and mind, he is united by his highest faculty with That, which is beyond all knowing." Ralph Waldo Emerson has stated the same thing in a different way. He says, "The rapture of prayer and ecstasy of devotion lose all being in one Being." All this requires intense personal experience through the medium of spiritual exercise. Even the Sufis of the Middles East believed that the rational arguments are required to be buttressed by intuitive and subjective experience. Daniel Coleman, the first Christian Monks, who lived like hermits in the barren Egyptian desert, adopted the meditative techniques of the East. They repeated their prayer, "Kyrie Eleison" silently until it became as spontaneous and instinctive as breathing. The prayer seeks mercy on the sinner. About the meditation of the Jews he says that as he repeats the name, he directs his attention upwards from "Yesod", the limited ordinary mind, into 'Tiferet', an awareness beyond ego. That means he directs his thoughts away from all forms of this world, focusing on the name. If his efforts meet with God's grace, the self will suddenly rise up beyond 'Tiferet' to an ecstatic state called "Daat", or Knowledge. Here his sense of separation from God dissolves. The end of the aspirant's path is "Devekut", a state in which his soul cleaves to God. When his consciousness stabilizes at this level he becomes a "Saddik" or saint. The qualities of a "Saddik" include equanimity, indifference to praise or blame and a sense of being alone with God.

The sum and substance of all these express statements is that the *jiva* and the *brahman* are one. We have to start our spiritual journey from the position of the *jiva* and attain the goal at the level of the Brahman. On the way we experience various states, which justify different philosophical concepts. In the end we come to the

position where the limited 'I', the *jiva* gets dissolved in the unlimited 'I', the Brahman. At this point we perceive the immortality and the eternity and come to believe that nothing dies. Although in the limited sense we die frequently, in the real sense of totality we never die. Take the case of any act – say – a journey to a specific place. There are three elements in this act, the traveller, the journey and the destination. As soon as the traveller reaches the place, the journey ends and the traveller ceases to be a traveller or in other words he dies. Thus, in the context of any situation circumscribed by place and time anything can be seen as mortal. But if we perceive the situation in its intrinsic significance we shall realize that nothing dies for in the given example the traveller, the journey and the destination, all the three get merged. To have this attitude we have to raise ourselves to Divinity. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji saw everything as immortal for he himself is immortal. Let us all bow in reverence to his immortality.

If we look around we will observe innumerable things, animate and inanimate. Every such thing observed by us has two aspects, its essence and its form. Essence is the subtle substance that is not visible but is manifest in many ways and can be discerned by the observers. Form is the outer appearance that attracts the first glance of the observer. It is a matter of common knowledge that the form is changeable and, therefore, mortal. Take the case of a human being, he undergoes various stages of a baby, a child, an adolescent, a teenager, a youth, an old person and finally a decayed skeleton like structure. Same is the case of a bird and an animal. All these have similar stages of childhood and adulthood. Finally, death comes and destroys their outer form. In the case of the vegetable world a seed sprouts forth and grows into a sapling. In due course of time it becomes a full-fledged tree. It gives shade to a traveller. It yields fruits and is clothed with shining green leaves, glittering blossom and colourful flowers. Eventually it decays and is used as firewood. Many trees are cut and their timber is used for making and fabricating various items of furniture, joinery and other things. Here again the form undergoes change and also

destruction in the long run but the seed remains that goes through the same cycle once again. This cycle is never-ending but again the seed will remain as indestructible essence.

Essence of us human beings is our soul, which is immortal. It adopts and assumes various forms at different times and that form is mutable and subject to destruction. It has rightly been said by an English poet, "Dust thou art, to dust returnest, was not spoken of the soul." An important statement made by the Bhagavadgita is that the essence knows the form. So it calls the form as *kshetra* or the field and the essence as *kshetrajna* or the knower of the field. It says while the field is perishable the knower is imperishable. Form is appearance and thus important so far as our relationship with outer world is concerned. Yet it is also true that it is the essence that controls and governs, directs and steers. This essence is immortal and immutable; the form is changeable but imperishable in its essence. Another important feature about this essence called soul is that it is neither destroyable by itself nor can destroy any other thing. That which is born only meets with an end, *jatasya dhruvo mrityuh*. That which is not born *per se*, cannot die. So this essence of ours, this soul is imperishable. Again I might repeat that it is the form, the outer appearance that perishes but not the inner essence, the substance. Take the case of our body. Even this is not perishable. The appearance it has from time to time undergoes changes but the intrinsic essence remains. It is said that this body is made up of five elements and when a person dies the five elements mix with the larger mass of these elements. Earth goes to earth, water to water, air to air, fire to fire and ether to ether. That being so, where is the question of body getting perished. Earth, water, air, fire and the ether, all are immortal. These have been there for time immemorial and shall exist for ever in future as well.

The question, therefore, arises what is it that is mortal? The answer is the outer frame, the appearance. The appearance is mutable and hence mortal in its individual form. The essence remains but

the form goes on changing. Some thinkers are of the opinion that everything has two aspects. Either it is or it is not, either it exists or it does not exist and either it is born or it is not born. In case it is born it must die. The Gita says, *Jatasya hi dhruvo mrityuh, dhruvam janm mritasya cha:* "What is born must die and what dies must take birth again." The essence or the substance of anything is not born and hence does not die. The outer form or the appearance takes a shape or is born and hence must die in that form. As for the two aspects of existence and non-existence of a thing, it does not sound convincing. After all, what does not exist cannot be conceived of and cannot be thought about. We have a clear authority in the Bhagavadgita, *Naasato vidyate bhavah, naabhavah vidyate satah*: "What is non-existent cannot be conceived and what cannot be conceived cannot exist." There is another way of looking at this question of mortality and immortality. Ishavasya Upanishad says, *Ishavasyam-idam-sarvam:* "Everything here verily is pervaded by the Divine." We know that the Divine is immortal, unborn, imperishable and immutable. The creation is his manifestation. So the entire creation is immortal whereas its various forms are subject to change.

The essence of the entire creation that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji has underscored by declaring that death does not come to the immortal. Sri Gita says, *Dehino-asmin yatha dehe kaumaram yauvanam jara, tatha dehantaras praptir dheeras tatra na muhyate:* "Just as the soul in the body adopts childhood, youth and old age in different stages, it leaves one body and enters a different one as yet another step." It implies thereby that there is no death, no perishing and no mortality. Once we understand this gospel of Bhagavaan Ji, we will be in a frame of mind where nothing grieves us and nothing makes us sad. In fact, it will enable us to adopt a balanced attitude in all situations of the pair of opposites, loss and gain, defeat and victory, grief and joy and the like. This situation is stated to be the state of yoga, *Samatvam yoga uchyate:* "The balanced attitude is all that is about yoga."

**T.N. Dhar 'Kundan'**

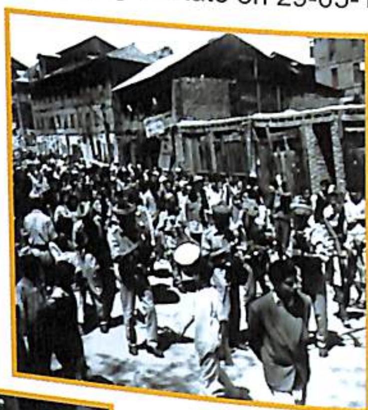


His only photograph enables devotees to have Charan Darshan. He would never pose for a photograph. It was a difficult task to click his photograph for any photographer.

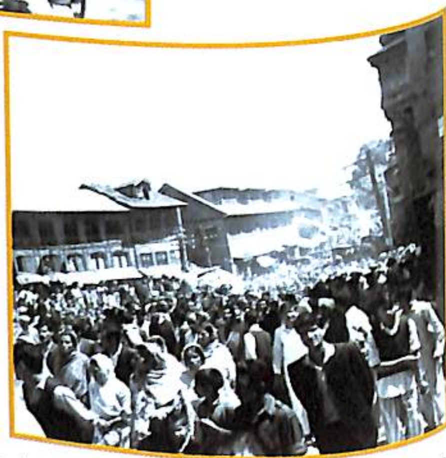
# Scene of Braikujan Assan



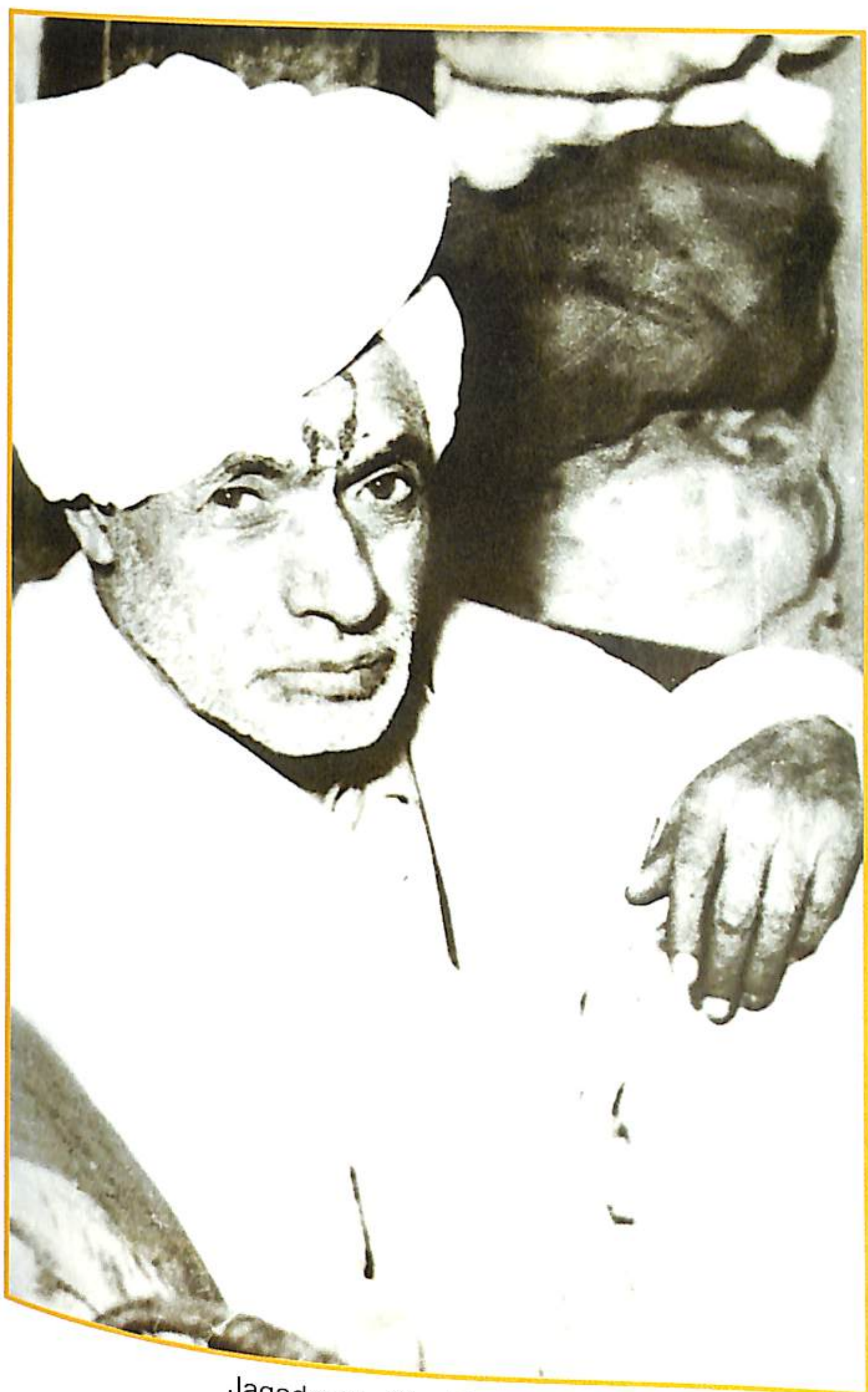
The body lying in State on 29-05-1968







The mortal remains being carried in a regal way with devotion and reverence to the crematorium at Karan Nagar led by J&K Govt, Police Band; thousands of devotees of all religious faith followed the cortage.



Jagadguru - The Beacon Light



Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji
in 1948 AD

## (B) AMARA CHHA MARAAN

The world is like a zoo, the artificial habitat of countless *devas* (celestial beings, gods, demigods, godly persons), birds, beasts, men and women with dissimilar disposition wherein each, according to its karmic cycle, takes a body form and is bound by the results of its own actions. The manifested world in all its transparency conforms to the laws of karma (material activities with fruits of action). The dominance of *sattava* (light, purity) leads one to devahood, that of *rajoguna* (activity, passion) to manhood and that of *tamas* (ignorance, inertia, darkness) to bestiality (lit. the brute-kind or *tiryaka-yoni*). Enmeshed in *vasanas* (subtle desires), a living unintelligent being takes birth again and again in the womb of its mother, just to repeat the unending cycle of birth and death. Perceptibly or imperceptibly each organism, in whatever form it exists, aspires for liberation at one moment or the other, to recognize and reach its true *svarupa* (reality). The urge is inherent and natural. Constant churning turns yoghurt to butter and striking two or more pieces of wood to fire. Likewise, the churning of the *atma* (the soul) leads to the realization of the self, liberating man from bondage and ignorance (*avidya*) to freedom (*svatantrya*).

*Atma*, as Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji would quite often repeat, is immortal and imperishable. *Amara chha maran* (does the immortal die or perish?). That has been the revelation of those noblest of wise men that became the foundation for formulating the scriptures which came to be known as Vedas (the divine knowledge revealed to four inspired *adi-rsis*: Agni, Vayu, Aditya and Angira). Of *atman*, the *Isopanisada* says:

"Whosoever sees all beings in the soul and soul in all beings does not shrink away from the one in whom all beings have become one with the knowing soul,

"What delusion or sorrow is there for one who sees unity?

"It has filled all."

It is radiant, uncorporeal, invulnerable, without tendons, pure, untouched by evil, wise, intelligent, encompassing, self-existent. It organizes objects through eternity. That is the beauty of it. *Atma* is constant, imperishable, immutable, true, omnipresent from a tiny insect to a highly evolved *jiva*.

It is immeasurable, not comprehended by the senses. By itself it is luminous or put in a common parlance, the stellar sphere (*jyotirmandala*), ever illuminated and bright. Or it is what the Pratybhijna discourse says, *Caitanyam atma*; beyond the grasp of *manas* (mind) (*agrahya*). It is that *tattva* (Thatness, Reality) which is *Sat* and *Cit* (ever-existent/truthful; animate/full of life and awareness). It throbs in every heart. This is the essence of all existence at all levels or should one say – the marrow of all bones – structured in a living human organism. Briefly stated, it is the living impulse that moves, acts and directs, what to us appears, the universe, the manifested world of the divine/ 'I-Consciousness' in all its colourful form even when our thoughts cease, it is there hidden only from our gross vision. Using the metaphor of ether in a generalized way, *atman*, pervades everywhere. It is *nirlepa* (*lit.* sinless). The ether is present in all beings, fire/light (*tejas*) in water and air in terrestrial or earthly beings. It is not, however, *Ananda* (Bliss) because it is attached to the material body.

Life or death is only for the physical body and not for the soul which imparts life to the so-called man or woman. The soul never dies or takes birth; it is eternally existent and immortal. Sri Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji sets forth an expository discourse of it in the battle-field of Kuruksetra where the Kauravas and Pandavas face each other as antagonists to uphold *dharma* (righteous way of living as enjoined by the sacred scriptures, virtue) as understood by them. The battle is just to start and we find Arjuna, the protagonist, both armed and disarmed. He is over-come and smitten with grief at the very outset. Who/whom to kill and why? A purposeless action bewilders him. This could happen only to Arjuna and not to other *dramatis personae* – Duryodhana, Drona, Karna or Bhisma,

in the midst of the confusion created by Maya-clouded *indriyas* (sense-organs). Beholding that a man of action had come full circle in his *visada* (dejection), Sri Bhagavaan rises and speaks loud and clear to remove his delusion – nay, his illusion, caused by *Maya* (the illusory power of Brahman, the veiling and project power). He is fully aware of ambivalent attitude of Arjuna (though gifted with spotless intellect). *Kutastva kasmalam idam* (from where/whence this depression?) directly asks Sri Krisna of Arjuna and then continues a minute analysis of those very basic questions that have left the rationalists confused in their enquiry of the self till date. A self-realized Pandit sees through the decay and failure of the one that is dead and the one who is to die soon, so why this remorse? Enveloped in *Maya* the mortal frame of all beings, including Bhisma, etc. are fugitives (*lit.* uncertain). All the world of sentient beings, both before and after birth, had no body and will have none after they are gone. They appear to have a physical frame only in the middle. This *atma-tattva*, says the Lord, is inpenetrable. Some see it as a wonder others liken it to wonder itself, some listen of it as a wonder but none understands its true nature. Just as one discards old garments to take on new ones, so does a *jivatma* (the eternal individual soul) enter a new body. Weapons do not divide it (*atma*), fire does not burn it, water does not wet it and wind does not dry it up. It is stable and eternal, beyond the range of *indriyas*.

Beyond the grasp of the mind, it is not susceptible of emotion. It is neither the killer nor the one that gets killed. It is not born, it does not die. It is eternal (*sasvata*), unborn (*aja*), constant (*nitya*) and ancient (*purana*). It is eternal and does not suffer any change.

The Upanisads succinctly lay bare the mystery of *atma*, but that too in the form of aphorisms. "It is not this, it is not that." Obviously the sages and seers love the technique of elimination (nascence?). Indirectly they would tell us what is it that hears? (ears?); what is it that sees? (eyes?); what is that tastes? (*rasana?*), what is it that smells? (*nasika?*), what is it that feels? (*skin?*) and so on. Indirectly it would imply that it is *atma* that underlies all such

activities of different sense organs and is the source of all enrgy and action, *nartakam atma*.

A dead body that lies like a log of wood is motionless and inert. Though possessed of all the *indriyas*, it is incapable of any vibration or sensation worth the name. The sap is gone. A mess of flesh and bones is reduced to ashes. The so-called vehicle of *Maya* (but otherwise the medium of great potential in man) is now empty. The spirit that invested it a short while back has ended the bondage. *Atma* is as free as it was before, lucent and luminous but what about the body. Where is gone the connectivity? *Atma* does not admit any alternative, it is accomplished (*nirvrta*) as before but the body cover lies on the ground; a corpse vacant and empty. No more the nobleness of spirit, no more an indwelling or animated principle embodied. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji clearly perceived that the body without the indwelling spirit was hollow. It was the bonding of *atma* (*dehi* – identification with body) that gave a purpose and meaning to man's life. *Atma* is exempt from death, but not the body where it finds its abode for sometime. The human soul is the master of the body, just as the lord is of the infinite cosmos. But what differentiates one from the other is that God is *Sat* and *Cit* and *Ananda*, whereas *atma* is ever existent, indestructible, truthful and *cit*-animate, full of life and awareness, but is not *Ananda*. As stated its indwelling spirit (*atma*) constantly strives to attain bliss (*Ananda*), to realize (*Pratyabhijna*) through the light of *intelligence* – 'I-Consciousness'.

Through sustained *yogic* practices, the human soul is able to rid the mind of negative emotions like desire, anger, greed, affliction, jealousy, hatred, pride and ego. Once the mind attains tranquility and is under total control of *caitanya* (the foundational Consciousness) [*caitanyam atam*], that gets him deployed to a higher purpose of realization and recognition, that ultimately leads to his identification with Param Siva or what the Vedantins see as the ultimate bliss for the soul arising out of its union with the Supreme Lord and termed as *moksa* (liberation or emancipation).

In either case the human (*jivatma*) remains always conscious and aware lest a slight lapse on his part repeats the cycle of re-birth.

Our sages and saints were more pre-occupied with the unravelling of the mystery of human existence than running after the transitory and fleeting objects of sense. We are reminded of their absorption of tradition, of free discourse, of how they had grown up listening from their elders the myths of their own land, fables and parables in their own tongues, the scriptures, the epics, the legends, the myths, etc. This clearly demonstrates how abundantly they tried to make clear the growing up curiosity to know the self followed by the evolution of a critical and creative faculty in them. Such an approach was not confined to a particular order only. The characters that impress most are not only of these seers and sages but even of those kings and *Rajarsis* who cultivated a similar divine insight. Narada, Naciketa and others symbolised the order of those craving souls that wanted to know the reality of life and death. The kings followed suit on such a journey of the spirit, Raja Janaka being the most illustrious example of it. Obviously social bonding was at the heart of all such narrations related to the divine which must have contributed to this strong sense of belonging. The watchword, therefore, was co-operation in this journey of this divine. Testing and contending the whole became a universal value. It finds its fulfillment in the establishment of the Vedic, Brahamanic and Aranyakeya literature. The world of the fable and the world of the real come together to offer a plausible explanation of what lies behind the mysterious universe. Sometimes such a wholesome climate of intellection may be fractured by some dissenting voice. Nevertheless, the search for the unknown remains an intensely passionate longing in the sincere seeker of the truth. And in that pursuit lies ineffable joy for the seeker.

I would like to add the following lines of *Chhandogya Upanisad*:

*The self, who can be realized by the pure in heart, who is life, light, truth, space, who gives rise to all works, all desires, all odours,*

*all tastes, who is beyond words, who is joy abiding. This is the Self, dwelling in my heart.*

Seekers of truth have always been eager to know – Who is a *Tattvajnani* (knower of the Truth), a *manisi*. Who is it that knows the essence of true *jnan* (knowledge)? Who is it that has delved into the secrets of the transcendental? To this the sages and seers pithily remark: *Jijnase Paramatmani*: this *Atma* pervades as *Sarvatma* everywhere, in every atom. It is *Caitanya* that occupies infinite space. This would imply that in any *atma* lie all *atmas* that speaks of its former's universality and indivisibility. Krishna's vision is an affirmation of the fact that 'all are from me, and "I am in all". There is no incarnation theory as commonly understood. This stands fully corroborated by the *Vedantic tattva* "I am Brahma" or what the Saivas would say, *Sivoham, Sivoham*: "I am Siva, I am Siva." Upanisads have repeatedly stressed: '*Satyam jnanam-anantam Brahma.*' *Caitanya* is unity. An *Atmajnani* (knower of the Self) *or Brahmajnani* (knower of Brahman) knows that it is absolutely true. He holds, *"Ayam atma Brahma"*, which an aspirant realizes only when his *sadhana* is complete or a *jiva* in *sahajavidya* (true knowldge) realizes the moment he is graced with *shaktipat* (transmission of spiritual energy from the realized spiritual teacher). Metaphors and other figures of speech do not convey what a *sadhak* (spiritual aspirant) actually realizes when his *sadhana* comes full circle.

The limitless (*ananta*) cannot be explained by any reasoning by the limited *jiva* nor can all the treatises fully explain or lay bare what is beyond human experience. A *Vedantin* knows the *rasa* (taste) of *Brahmajnana* in the same way as a Saiva tastes the nectar of *Jagadananda*. All the differentiations of *bhogya* (object of enjoyment) and *bhokta* (enjoyer) disappear and the realized soul experiences supreme bliss. All the sense-impressions recede.

One who has this realization of the identity of his self with the whole universe being constantly united with the Divine views the entire world as the play of the self identical with Siva, and is

liberated while alive. What matters, therefore, is the realization of one's identity with the whole universe. He views the whole world as play and by evolution (*unmesa*) and involution (*nimesa*) manifests or withdraws from it. That is why Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji always emphasized the fact that one should look to his centre and never forget it. The Bhagavadgita says;

"Having mentally entered in me those who are always united with me and wait upon me the great *yogi* has his consciousness always absorbed in the universal consciousness." (B.G. XII-2). Even while he is living [maintaining his *prana* (life-force, life-breath)] entire bondage is burnt to ashes by the fire of spiritual knowledge. After the fall of the body he abides as Siva Himself. Even in a mortal frame (i.e. while living) such a person is liberated. This is what Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji would often say, *amar chha zanh maran.* This is what is meant by the realization of the undying self. The yogi gets established in his imperishable self (the spiritual consciousness), if he is steadily absorbed in that state, either by withdrawing his senses, etc. Within himself (*sankoca*) as a tortoise withdraws its limbs within itself (the Gita II-58) or by the device of the expansion of all-embracing consciousness (*vikasa*), then he acquires omniscience and omnipotence. *Sankoca* here refers to the practice of withdrawing the attention from the activity of the senses and turning it towards the inner reality which is the source and background of all activity; concentration on the inner reality (finding one's centre) even while the senses are quite open of the external objects.

Individual consciousness establishes the presence of the *atma*. It has been reasoned or may be has been realized that it equals one ten-thousandth part of the foremost part of a hair of the forehead and consists of innumerable atoms (*Svetasvatera upanisad* V-9). Thus, the atom, when compared to a physical atom, is the minutest particle. It forms the basis of the body, a spark of fire that sustains it. It has the same impact on our body as we witness in the case of medicine. This flash of lightening of the *atma* is experienced/felt

in the body in the form of consciousness and that establishes its presence. Once this spark of fire is gone, it cannot be restored through any medium in the dead body.

We meet with its full exposition in the *Mundaka Upanisad*:

*Easo-anuratma cesta veditavyo yasminpranah pancadha samivivesa Prananicittam sarvamotam prajanam yasmin visuddhe vibhavatesa atma*

*Atma* is a particle of atom (measureless) in shape that can be known (only) through the mind (developed intellect). This *anu-atma* floats in five *pranas* [*prana* (life-force - active between the front portion of the nose and the heart), *apana* (life-force - working between the navel and souls of the feet), *vyana* (life-force - distributed and active over the whole body), *samana* (life-force - active between the heart and the navel) and *udana* (life-force - active between the front portion of the nose and the crown)]. It is stationed in the midst of the heart and has its impact on the entire body of a *jiva*. When it is refined from the blemish of five winds, its spiritual or, body luster (glory) is realized.

All the vibration (*spanda*) is due to its existence. Red blood corpuscles that account for carrying oxygen to lungs provide their energy to the *atma*. Once the *atma* makes its exit, the fusion of blood formaton ceases altogether. The atomic particles of the *atma* are compared to the innumerable atomic lustrous rays of the Sun.

The same supreme 'I' consciousness of the Lord, manifesting within itself this universe of diverse objects as if moving, is referred to as *spanda*. According to its etymological derivation, *spandate iti spandah:* "That which throbs (with life) is *spanda*." The *spanda* principle is thus one's own essential self. One could conclude with what has been said by the author of *Sri Pratyabhijna,* "O Lord whence can there be any fear to the eternally happy one, in this world filled with his own self, who, in thought-free state, sees entire objective phenomena as Thy own Form." Utpala, totravali XIII-16.

A question that arises is: "Why does this embodied self not shine in all its perfection, even though it is of the nature of the greatest Lord? Why does it require the touch of the force of the inner self, the expedient *par excellence*?" (*Spanda-karika*, text of the commentary verse 8). The reply follows, in verse 9: "When the perturbation (*ksobha*) of that empirical individual who is incapacitated by his own impurity (*nijasudhya*) and is attached to actions disappears then the highest state appears."

It has been rightly said in Vijnanabhairava: "O dear one, when the ideating mind (*manas*), the ascertaining intellect (*buddhi*), the vital energy (*prana shakti*) and the limited experient I, This set of four dissolves, then the previously described (*Tat*) state of Bhairva appears." Verse 138.

To put it briefly, the *anava-mala* is the primal limiting condition which reduces the universal consciousness to an *anse* a small, limited entity. It is because of this that the *jiva* considers himself imperfect cut off from the universal consciousness. In this condition, the individual forgets his essential divine natures so *anava mala* is the innate ignorance of ones essential nature. *Ksobha*, as referred to above, may be explained as perturbation caused by primal ignorance, owing to which the limited individual considers the non-self as self and the self as the non-self.

The empirical being gets confined to subtle and gross bodies owing to *mayiya mala* (limitation of power of knowledge, which brings about the sense of difference). As a result of good and bad actions, these leave behind their impressions on his mind which obfuscates his reasoning dragging him down to material existence of further experiences. This is *karma-mala* (limitation of the universal power of action to a finite power. Its origin is the lack of awareness that Shiva is the only real agent or doer.) These, together with other limiting conditions, are called *asuddhi* (impurities/ limitations).

The word *ksobha* (perturbation) in the present context, as referred to above and elsewhere is responsible for all the fret and fervor of life. When this is dissolved, self-forgetfulness is replaced by self-recollection and man evolution is complete.

Prof. V. N. Drabu

## CHAPTER - IV

# INWARD AND OUTWARD

## *(SADHANA AND SEVA)*

### THE EVERLASTING POWER

Everything that we have in the form of any force, strength, power, is manifestation of Cosmic Mother within and without. If we have strength in our limbs, it is because of Her presence within us. If we are able to think, the power of thought is Her manifestation within us. If we have the power of reasoning, intellect, it is Her Divine manifestation. If we have the power of feeling and to comprehend the feelings of other, then it is the manifestation of Divine Mother. If we have the power to recall long forgotten events from our memory bank and bring them out, that power is an aspect of the cosmic power of the Divine Mother Who dwells within us.

She is everything: physical strength, power to think, power to reason, logic, power to feel, to remember, power to visualize the past, present and future. It is the power of the Divine Mother that makes the river to flow, wind to blow, fire to burn and great machines of the nature to work. She is the biting power of the mosquito, the hauling power of the elephant.

A man may have vast wealth but being a miser he never makes use of it. If he never invests his wealth, he will ever remain a poor man. His wealth will not develop and multiply. He cannot become wealthier and wealthier because he is not making use of what he has been given. He drags on a miserable existence. He does not even want to replace his old clothes. Not that he has no power, but he does not use it. On the other hand, an entrepreneur, a commercial magnate, goes on investing and continuously keeps on working and there is no end to his prosperity. He goes on progressing day after day, expands his empire. Why? Because he has put to use what he has. He has utilized, applied in a practical manner in his life, what he possesses.

Similarly, it is not that we do not possess power but if we do not apply it, we remain where we are. The secret of success in any field of endeavour is industry and application and, above all, perseverance in this industry and application. You take up something, apply yourself to it, and don't stop until you reach the goal. Keep on, persevere. Continuous effort is the key to ultimate achievement.

This is something that both Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji and Lord Krishna, each in their own way, state very explicitly. Lord Krishna states it in the sixth chapter of the Srimad Bhagavadgita.

Perseverance means not giving up, but with a calm, serene determination pursuing till the end. And suppose the goal is not attained at the end of that perseverance? That is not at all important, for the one who has thus persevered has succeeded. That person has achieved success. Success is not in getting something. Success lies in not giving up. Success lies in perseverance till the end. That is the greatest achievement in life. *Yoga* is no exception to it. *Bhakti* (devotion to God) is no exception to it. The attempt to control the mind is no exception to it. The attempt to achieve concentration is no exception to it. The attempt to lead a good life is no exception to it. The attempt to achieve concentration is no exception to it. The attempt to lead a good life is no exception to it. The attempt to control our senses, to attain victory over negative habits and cultivate and establish noble, positive habits is no exception to it. All yield to the mysterious power of persevering effort. It is an all-conquering force because it is a direct application of Divine Mother's presence in us. Nothing can stand before it. Everything yields to it, provided we persevere with utmost regularity.

Each human individual, each *jivatma* (individual soul) has been given the ability to attain anything that he wants and the power for it – physical, mental moral and intellectual. The only thing is, you should have enthusiasm, you should have aspiration and you should have a desire. Then everything becomes possible, because you have been endowed with this strength which is not an

ordinary strength. It is a manifestation of the supreme Cosmic Power.

Therefore, the power is with us. If we are not misers, if we apply or invest it by having a certain keen aspiration, by putting forth effort for an objective, by persevering in that objective with calm determination and keeping up this perseverance with utmost regularity, it yields results. That is the teaching.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was very positive about this in his guidance to us. He always used to say: "Do not despair. There is nothing impossible for you. Everything is possible if you keep on persevering. Do not yield. Do not give up."

You must benefit out of this truth about yourself. Reflect upon it. Know that you have within yourself the power to attain whatever you aspire for, provided you fulfill the conditions of perseverance, regularity in perseverance and a determination to persevere onward till the end.

## SADHANA

All of you are proceeding towards a definite goal. What does this proceeding towards a definite goal mean? What should it mean to you and imply to you? And in what way should it manifest in your thought, word and deed?

What should *sadhana* mean to you? How should this *sadhana* manifest in your life, in your thoughts, words and deeds? If spiritual life is the supreme ideal and if *yoga sadhana* (spiritual discipline for attaining union of the individual soul with the Universal Soul) is engaged in order to reach the goal, the *lakshya* of yoga, then what should *sadhana* mean, what should the life of *yoga* and *yoga abhyasa* (practice of *yoga*) mean to you, or imply to you? For unless you know what *sadhana*, *yoga* and *yoga abhyasa* should mean to you, imply to you, and how they should manifest in your life, how can you engage in true *sadhana* or *yoga abhyasa*? It cannot be effective.

Do our scriptures throw any light upon this very important and vital question? Yes, they do, not in some hidden, occult sense, some esoteric sense, which will have to be expounded by subtle thinkers and great philosophers trying to make meaning out of very subtle, mystical and ambiguous truths uttered in a high-flown way. Rather, directly, plainly, categorically, unambiguously, unmistakably, scriptures do have something to say about this vital question. What is it?

Rama had a goal: he wanted to punish Ravana for his misdeeds including abduction of Sita ji. Ravana also had a goal: he wanted to keep Sita. Ravana did not want to give Sita back to Rama even though people like his brother Vibhishana and even Mandodari, his wife, persuaded, begged, prayed and advised him to do so. And so, Ravana, in order to achieve his goal, fought in as many ways as it is possible to fight. And Rama, to attain His goal, also engaged himself in the battle – he fought. They did not lie down in an easy chair and ask someone else to do something for them. They went themselves. They asked the help of people. They consulted others. They gathered armies. They did all that was necessary to do, at least within the limits of their knowledge. To use an English expression: they left no stone unturned.

What to say of superior human beings like Prince Rama, a scion of the royal family, even animals - monkeys and bears - also tried their best to do everything. When they were helpness, they consulted each other! "What should we do now?" They sat down, put their heads together, thought about it and tried to see what they could do. So they also exercised their intelligence. They did not sit back.

When they had done all that they could, their very best, and could not go further, even then they did not give up. They further enquired, thought and reflected. Why? Because of their sincerity. They wanted to do it - really, truly, genuinely, authentically and, therefore, they did everything they could. They exercised their strength and they fought. They did not simply allow the opposition

to overcome them, saying, "What to do, it is the fate." No! If there was opposition they said, "We have to overcome. We must use our strength. We must be active. We must be dynamic. We must do something about it." This "doing" is *sadhana.*

While doing this there has to be active effort to overcome obstructions, to progress along the path and reach the Goal. *Yoga-abhyasa* means active effort to obtain the *lakshya,* to reach the Goal. *Sadhana* means active effort to obtain that which is possible of being obtained through effort. So, it means continuous effort in the right direction. And it means a willingness to keep up this continuous effort. It means, not a negative unproductive attitude of approach, but a positive, ever-willing attitude of engaging in active effort.

What will be the form of the active effort? The form will be that which is right and suitable for overcoming that which opposes, that which is suitable for achieving the Goal, that which takes you nearer and nearer in the direction you wish to move. It will be that which is intelligently chosen and which is through and through common sense. You must apply both your intelligence and common sense. God has given you intelligence. You must apply both your intelligence and common sense and be thus actively engaged in moving towards the Goal.

This active effort is the essence of *sadhana* and it should be throughout. *Sadhana* means active effort. *Yoga abhyasa* means active effort. It may be mental effort. It may be verbal effort. It may be physical effort. It may be all three combined. It may be a fourth kind of effort which is not covered by mental, physical and verbal effort. But it is all effort.

If you want to do some ordinary mundane thing such as indulging in some pleasure, how much effort you will do, how much you will weigh the pros and cons to discover how somehow or other you may be able to satisfy your senses and please your mind. All night and day you engage in doing it. The same thing should be applied in the direction of *yoga.*

But, if on the contrary you are only engaged in actively seeking sense pleasures, in satisfying yourself, in hunting for selfish fulfillment, then active effort will be present, but it will be in the wrong direction. It will not produce any concentration or ecstasy or higher consciousness. It will not because it is being done in a wrong direction.

So, the effort must be in the right direction. And it should not be accompanied by self-sabotage. It should not be accompanied by working against yourself in another direction. If in one area you are vigorously working for yourself in the right direction but in another area you go on working in the opposite direction, then naturally your right effort will be unproductive, because you are undoing what you are trying to do.

Therefore, active effort should be accompanied by earnestness and sincerity. It should be accompanied by common sense and ordinary intelligence - not extraordinary intelligence which is not in the possession of all people. Let us take the normal human being; a *sadhaka* is a normal person. And from where one is one starts, for that is one's equipment at that point in time. Therefore, with common sense, enquiry and reflection and with whatever intelligence God has endowed you with, make active effort to overcome that which stands in the path, within and without, and move steadily towards the Goal.

This is what all scriptures show. Rama exercised this active effort, and He also fought a battle. Devi also keeps on fighting battle after battle. The Mahabharata shows the same thing, the exercise of active effort. You have to overcome that which is contrary to your ideal and goal. And you must keep on, keep on and not get disheartened, not get frustrated. There were times when even Lord Rama got a little perturbed because everything He used against Ravana proved to be of no avail. Then a sage comes and tells Him: "No, no, no, this is not the way. Come along, buck up!" Then he gives Him a little help. That means that the emphasis is always upon the positive.

Gurudev many a time used to say, "Do not despair." For where there is despair, there is no hope. Interestingly enough, the three great cardinal virtues within the Christian theological context are faith, hope and charity. Much emphasis is put upon hope and you know what the reason is. Hope is necessary, because the spiritual life, *sadhana* and *yoga abhyasa* are not easy. It is not as if you can just put a coin in a slot-machine and out comes a fruit. It is not like that. There is no assurance of quick results and fruits. Ultimate fruits are what we are aiming at, not immediate successes. If we keep on our effort, then the ultimate fruit is assured.

This is the truth that scriptures try to draw our attention to in respect of our spiritual life. This is what scriptures, in their very clear and unmistakable way, say. Not in any subtle, hidden, occult and esoteric way, but plainly, calling a spade a spade. They put before us this plain fact, the plain truth: We have to keep on making effort. *Sadhana, yoga abhyasa*, spiritual life, mean using common sense, intelligence and keeping up effort to reach the goal which we have set for ourselves. Every scripture we touch has this common universal message even though they may vary in certain details. The basic central message is plain for anyone to see.

If we can see this basic, central message, accept it, apply it, and thus engage in *sadhana* with common sense and intelligence, then victory will be ours, because it heads towards victory.

Throughout North India the Navaratras end in the day of victory. Rama becomes the victor; His efforts give Him fruit. Similarly, after nine days of worship, the tenth day is celebrated as the great victory of the Divine Mother over all that opposes Her. It is called *Vijaya Dashmi*, the name itself is significant. People greet each other; they exchange greeting cards. Why? It is rejoicing at the victory. The great experience of victory is the assured culmination. You are meant for it.

*Sadhana*, therefore, means victory. *Yoga abhyasa* means victory ultimately. Spiritual life means victory ultimately. God blesses you

with such a victory! May the Divine Mother give you the intelligence, the common sense and the effort to attain this victory!

## MOMENT TO BEGIN ANEW

What is the one and only reality worth our striving for! Homage unto that being in Whom you all live, in Whom you all move, in Whom you all have your being totally, your physical being, your mental and intellectual being and your real, innermost spiritual being.

Totally and literally you exist in God, Who exists everywhere and Who exists ever and ever more. There can be no other possibility than that we all exist in that Supreme Being, for He is forever and He is everywhere - here, now and always - for He is the great Reality. He is infinite is space, eternal in time and beyond time. Therefore, there is no other possibility but that we exist in Him, we live in Him, and we move in Him, we have our being in Him. He is our all-in-all within and without.

The recognition of this fact is the beginning of spiritual life. The experiencing of this fact is the end of spiritual life. And the endeavour to constantly grow into an ever-progressive awareness of this fact is the very essence of spiritual life. Ultimately, it is the awareness of this fact that is the purpose of all spiritual practices, whether it is *japa* (repetition of the Lord's Name, repetition of sacred word or set of words) or prayer or contemplation or study or fellowship. When one begins to strive and endeavour to grow in the awareness of this fact, one's spiritual life becomes active and progresses. When one experiences this and becomes established in this experience, one's spiritual life comes to fruition.

The realization that 'God alone is real, the world is unreal' is the beginning of spiritual life. Practice, reflection is the essence of spiritual life. Brahman is the ultimate culmination of spiritual life.

There is no spiritual life unless a soul suddenly recognizes that everything that is seen, heard, tasted, smelt, touched, thought about or perceived does not constitute the Reality. For, everything changes, passes and vanishes. The recognition that there is something beyond, something behind the ever changeful, begins one's quest after knowing more about It, one's quest after understanding more about It. So one seeks, one questions, and one begins to investigate.

Loving adorations to the spiritual presence of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, who has created a vast body of awakening, proclaiming this fact, compelling us to recognize this great truth, inducing us and inspiring us to endeavour to become aware of this truth and ultimately helping us, illumining us, and bestowing upon us this great experience that we may become forever blessed. All this and more he is doing for the present global human society, working in their midst in the form of his inspiring and illuminating wisdom teachings. He is present, he is active, and he is dynamically working in the form of his wisdom teachings.

The ancient illumined seers and sages exist, powerfully exist, and forcefully call upon us to awake, arise and become illumined. They work within us as the Upanishadic teachings, as the wisdom of the Upanishads. That is why they are immortal. As names and forms they have become ancient. As forms they have vanished. But as a spiritual light, as a spiritual force, as an awakening power, they very much dwell amongst us, they very much work amongst us and they are available to each and every sincere seeker, who is wishing to draw inspiration, to enter the path and to proceed towards the Goal. This is the truth. They are immortal, they are timeless. Therefore, they are sometimes called the eternal spiritual masters of mankind. This is true of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji as well.

Let today be the first day of great commencements, a day of new beginnings, a day of entering with greater vigour into the life spiritual, a day to impart a fresh impetus to our quest and striving and *sadhana*. Let this be the right moment for each one of you to strive to enter deeper into these truths about the spiritual life.

Because until and unless we rid ourselves of the error that what is visible is the real, is the truth, and become awakened to the fact that what is unseen is the great reality, that what is invisible is more the fact than what is visible, until and unless this new awareness is created and becomes the basis of our day-to-day living, our spiritual life will still lack authenticity, our spiritual life will still fall short of being the genuine thing.

When the outer is felt to be the solid reality, the important thing, then the inner becomes something remote, more a concept than a fact. This is undesirable. This is not as it should be. Therefore, one needs to correct one's perspective and change one's inner awareness, begin to live with a new consciousness and have a right sense of values. And this is the right time to do so.

## LIVE IN THE LIGHT

Let us offer our heart's gratitude to the Divine, the Cosmic Being, Who has conferred upon us the rare and blessed status of being thinking, feeling and reasoning human beings upon this planet earth. For this great blessedness, let us offer our gratitude by applying this great gift in the highest, noblest and most sublime manner until the last breath is in the body.

And let us offer our heart's gratitude to Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji who is to us the ideal, both for our own subjective inwardness of conduct, character, thinking and feeling as well as for our attainment of inner Self, inner consciousness of Self-awareness, and becoming a *karma yogi* (one who practices the *yoga* of selfless action) par excellence, a being filled with universal love, compassion, kindness and dynamic goodness. He has thus placed himself before us as a manifold ideal for our living, both in our subjective inwardness as well as our endeavour upon the outer field of our day-to-day living.

The sacred invocation that has come down to us from our scriptures is: from darkness to ascend into the Light. That we should not enter into darkness but should move towards the Light

is made abundantly clear by the Upanishads. We should ever face the Light. We should live in the Light, because we are of the Light. If we do not make Light our supreme destiny, if we do not make ourselves votaries of that Light of lights beyond all darkness, then we run the danger of going from darkness to greater darkness. Those who direct their attention to that which is ephemeral, fleeting, that which is not the Eternal Reality, they enter into blinding darkness. For, if we make all our life a pursuit of the lesser knowledge, which only increases vanity and confirms the error of outer appearances being the reality, then we enter into deeper darkness.

Worshipping either *avidya* (ignorance, nescence) or *apara vidya* (lesser knowledge) is fraught with danger. Both lead from darkness to denser darkness. Therefore, we have to ever strive for *para vidya*, the greater knowledge, the supreme knowledge that illumines, enlightens and liberates – that should be our life's endeavour. We must ever move towards that great Light of lights that is beyond all darkness, attaining the region of which one does not return to this realm of pain and death and rebirth.

That should be well pondered. That should be reflected upon. That should be meditated upon, and that should be attained. Hence it is that we pray that our intellects may be illumined – to bring light into the darkness of *avidya* that prevails within. It is perhaps to remind us every day that our life should always be a continuous striving to bring light into the darkness.

And it was to perhaps remind us to never forget this great task, to ever keep before us this great ideal, that our wise ancestors have conceived the festival of lights, Dipavali, where the darkness of the new moon night, *amavasya*, is illumined by millions and millions of bright twinkling lights from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari where the whole of India would be one great light if you were to observe it from a satellite. It is to ever remind us that we should make our life a constant process of moving from darkness into light, or making ourselves a living light of the Divine.

If He is Paramatma (having the nature of Supreme Light and is the Supreme Self) and we are His *amsas* (parts), as the Lord Himself states in the Bhagavadgita, then we are also *paramjyotis* (supreme light) in a lesser way. We are the transcendental light in our essential nature. Our true identity is light and not darkness. Our true identities are effulgence and not gloom. Our true identity is radiance. Therefore, let us arouse within ourselves the light of this consciousness and be as a lamp unto darkness.

We reiterate that admonition at this moment. Let us strive diligently by all the power at our disposal to ever make ourselves a centre of radiant, divine effulgence, a centre of shining character and sublime good conduct, a centre of awakened spirituality and a dynamic manifestation of that awakened spirituality in the form of a divinely lived life. For that is the great need of this benighted world of ours, more than half of which has rejected God, rejected the scriptures as superstition and rejected this quest of the human spirit towards the Supreme Light. It has instead taken to hedonism – eat, drink and be merry, have a good time, satisfy the senses and fulfill desires.

That is the great darkness – a total misconception regarding the very fundamental purpose and meaning of life on earth, and, therefore, a headlong plunge into the wrong direction. And the deplorable results, the widespread ignorance and confusion brought about by this blind pursuit of pleasure are everywhere to be seen in the human world upon this planet earth today.

Will you not be lights in this darkness that is spreading over the human world? Will you not make use of the supreme privilege of protecting care of a perfected sage that God has blessed you with and be each one of you a shining light, and strive humbly and simply to be a lamp unto the feet of others? Awaken the light within and let it radiate through your every thought, word and action. And thus make this life a purposeful and a glorious ascent into the fullness of light where one becomes an enlightened being, an illumined shining with the light of spiritual consciousness, divine consciousness.

That is the goal. That is to be striven after. That is your great privilege and good fortune to be able to strive towards that attainment. That is your great blessedness. Avail of this privilege. Avail of this golden opportunity. Avail of this blessedness. Avail of this supreme good fortune. Turn away from darkness and move towards the Light.

Make your life a mass of divine radiance. Make yourself a radiant light. Be a light unto yourself and a lamp unto the feet of others. Fill your life with the effulgence of the divine quality that is your birthright. That is the central thrust of the message that beloved and worshipful Holy Master, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji has left for us – for our being and doing and living.

## THE GITA YOGA

Worshipful homage unto the Divine Presence. He who is manifest as all that exists, who is infinite, having innumerable names and forms for our constant edification, for our constant uplift and reminder of His all-pervading omnipresence. The perception of this omnipresence is real sight; not to perceive this omnipresence is true lack of sight. It is a vision that goes beyond the visible and perceives the invisible.

That is the spiritual vision that the Gita wants us to receive from its wisdom teachings, to adopt for our view of all things, and to keep it as a basis for our approach to all things – this inner vision penetrating beyond the visible and perceiving the invisible. "I am the hidden essence of all things. I am the Eternal hidden within the non-eternal."

Man's vision has two defects. Man's vision is directed upon names and forms, and he fails to perceive that which the names and forms hide. His vision is always directed outwards and, therefore, he fails to perceive that which is inside, that which is more immediate, nearer.

Turn the gaze within. Thus admonish the Gita wisdom teachings in the sixth chapter of the Gita. "Your vision is outside, O Man, therefore you do not perceive Me, Who am shining in the chambers of your heart. Turn the gaze within. Then you will become instantly aware of Me."

The Gita has many verses in it that are verbatim repetitions of the verses of the Kathopanishad. Again and again, they both speak of discipline, of turning the gaze within, controlling the senses and desiring to see that which is within – with eyes averted from sensual objects, he sees the *atma* within. He desires to have that which shines within, not that which is without, for that which shines within is a light greater than all lights put together. It is the Light of lights beyond all darkness. It is that supreme Light which is more effulgent and brighter than any light that we know – the Sun, Moon, stars, fire, and lightening.

It indwells your heart. Therefore, turn the gaze within. That is the light of the Divine. So that is the most important place for you to turn your attention to your spiritual heart within. It is the region of the inner spiritual heart which is the most important place in the whole universe. We have forgotten it because our gaze is on diverse things.

Therefore, if you want to turn the gaze away from diverse things, to turn it within and become aware of the radiance, the region of your spiritual heart, then you must practise sitting quiet, alone, where there are no things. That is why spiritual aspirants will sit in a corner and face the wall. Then they see nothing except what they want to see, perhaps either the form of their *ishta* (Chosen Deity) or the symbol of OM.

If you sit facing the wall, turning your back to the world, then, at one stroke, many things that distract have no scope to bother you. That is why seekers go to a lonely place where there are not many things. Then it becomes less difficult to perceive or become aware of the One. Therefore, sit for some time alone,

withdraw the vision from outer things and fix it upon the Supreme Reality. This is *abhyasa*, this is practice, and this is the Gita *yoga*.

What about those times when you cannot go and sit in a corner and face the wall, when you have to turn towards the world and see everything, behold everything? No problem. The Gita says that whatever you behold, that also is that which you are seeking. It is that which the ultimate Reality is. But the only thing is: perceive its hidden essence.

"All things are indwelt by Me. I pervade all things. Having enveloped this entire universe and all things in it, am still in My supreme transcendence. I am above all things, but I am very much in all things. I am very much all around you as all things. I alone appear as the many. I am in all things, and I alone exist in the midst of the seeming many. I am the One that exists like a thread running through the beads of a necklace. The beads are many, variegated, different, but the thread is one, the same, continuous, non-different, *akhanda*. I am the *sutratma* (the immanent deity of the totality of the subtle bodies). Know Me as such, see Me as such and become established in My vision."

He sees who sees the supreme Lord existing equally in all things, the unperishing within the perishing. This is the outer *yoga* of the Gita – the *yoga* of the so-called battlefield – that which beholds the One as the common factor in the many.

In a hundred different things made of cotton, the common factor is cotton only. In a hundred different gold ornaments, the common factor is gold and gold only. In a hundred pots and bowls in a potter's shop, the common factor is clay only. Even so, in a million different things, the common factor is the God-principle only, is the Divine only, is the Atman only, *Idam sarvam vadayam atma* "All these are the Self, O dear."

May we try to perceive the One within the many, the Divine that indwells Its own creation. Let the Gita, the Gita view, the Gita approach, be constantly meditated upon, reflected upon; and let us

seek to cultivate this Gita vision and the Gita *abhyasa* (practicing the teachings of the Gita). Make it the basis for your life. Awaken from within you the Gita vision. Make a diligent study of it.

May the God within us grace us to perceive His presence within and to live in His presence, so that the sweet aroma of His presence makes our life fragrant even as the fire burning at the tip of the incense stick draws forth the fragrance hidden inside, wafts it all around and fills the surroundings with fragrance. Let the fire of this knowledge, the ever-burning fire of this awareness, draw forth from within us the fragrance of our divine Reality.

And may this fragrance of divinity drawn forth from within us waft around us and make everything fragrant. Let it manifest itself from within us through our speech, through our thoughts, through our actions, and may we be able, wherever we go, at all times, to take with us this divine fragrance and fill our immediate environment with it. That is divine life! May the indwelling Divine bless us all!

## THE CALL OF THE GREAT ONES

Worshipful homage unto the Universal Spirit, the eternal Cosmic Being, Who has sent each individual soul here into this earth plane for evolving, for an ascent unto Divinity, for steadily progressing towards that ultimate fulfillment of God's plan for each individual, which is fullest illumination and enlightenment, the knowing of oneself to be part of God, the journey back unto fullness, freedom, perfection, absolute Divinity! Worshipful homage unto that Being Who has sent us forth here, and now has decided that our outward journey has been sufficient and that now we must start our inward journey, back towards our source and origin.

Loving adorations to beloved Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji and those like him who have been sent by the Supreme Being, by the Cosmic Eternal Spirit, to help each one of us in this inner journey of the spirit back towards its source and origin! They are the messengers of God. They are the prophets who call us back. They

are the illumined masters. They are the enlightened world teachers. They are the sages established in God-consciousness who come amidst mankind and search our wandering souls whose time has now come to take to the inner path that leads to Self-realization. Searching them out, they inspire, they awaken, they help, they guide. Therefore, they are the supreme benefactors of mankind.

Most fortunate and blessed are we who have been called into this inner journey that completes our destiny. Thrice blessed are those who realize this, recognize this inner, mystical, spiritual truth, which, recognizing the exact implication of this spiritual vocation, this call of the Eternal, whole-heartedly plunge into this spiritual journey and commence the inner ascent towards Divinity.

That is the call of the Gita: *tasmad yogi bhava'rjuna:* "Therefore, become a Yogi, O Arjuna." Come, awake, arise with firm resolution and seek the immortal, move towards the Eternal. Strive for Self-realisation." Thus, that soul who recognizes the implications of being upon the earth place as a human individual is fortunate. He is not labouring under a handicap. On the contrary he is at a vintage point. He takes advantage of this great opportunity and concentrates all his energy, all his attention upon this great vocation and becomes thrice blessed.

This is the call of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, the great Guru, "You are the ever-liberated one. You have no *karmic* bondage. Neither do you have any bondage of physical *karma* (action operating through the law of cause and effect), nor bondage of verbal *karma*, nor bondage of mental *karma*. Free of all bondage, you are the ever-liberated, free Spirit, the Cosmic Being. Why do you not recognize this fact? Why do you still wander about, groping, falling, stumbling? Why do you weep and wail? Come, rejoice and enter into this adventure of life. Joyously undertake this pilgrimage to the pinnacle of perfection."

Jesus too calls: "Most fortunate and blessed are ye. Come, come, seek the Eternal. Give it first priority. That is the highest

value. It is the pearl of surpassing price, to have which it is worthwhile throwing aside and giving up everything else."

If a farmer, a labourer even, discovers that there is hidden gold in the field he is labouring in, then he goes home and sells away everything that he has and purchases that small plot of land. People may think that this person is foolish: "What is he doing? Paying such an exorbitant price for this bit of land is madness!" But he knows that the price that he is paying is nothing, because this plot of land contains hidden gold, a hundredfold more valuable than the price he is now paying. He knows.

Thus, it is with the awakened individual soul. He knows that everything that has been given up for the spiritual ideal is nothing. Nothing has been given up. For the spiritual ideal is more valuable than all the gold and silver and diamonds, and the wealth of the world put together. It is the treasure of treasures, the wealth, the pearl of surpassing price, unparalleled. He knows, and, therefore, he takes this step with rejoicing. He says: "My renunciation is no renunciation. It is a great acquisition, a great gain."

With knowledge and wisdom, with understanding and recognition, with clear vision and insight, the great step is taken, and it is rejoicing all the way. For every moment, each step and every breath, it is the fulfillment of God's divine plan for the fortunate individual soul. Therefore, one must rightly understand, appraise, evaluate and recognize the life spiritual, the ideal divine and the goal supreme. That is wisdom. That is real blessedness.

Then one brings to bear all enthusiasm and all energy to this quest, because one knows the worth of what one is doing. And that is a great thing. Thus, it is the sharing of each moment in the name of beloved and worshipful Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, in whose presence we are drawn together so that we may open each day with clarity and not confusion, with keen enthusiasm and interest and not half-heartedness, or luke warmness, that we may be blessed and that we may walk in the light. May our lives be lived in the light

of this recognition and wisdom. God bless you all, most fortunate souls that you may thus live with understanding and move towards divine perfection, which is our calling and our divine destiny!

## WORSHIP THAT IS DEAR TO BHAGAVAAN GOPINATH JI

Worshipful homage unto the eternal Reality – the one, beginningless, endless, changeless, infinite, eternal, all-pervading, immanent and indwelling Reality – that is the source, support and ultimate fulfillment of all existence! Infinite and all-pervading, He is present everywhere; dwelling in you, He is nearer to you than yourself. That being, in whom you live, move and have your being, indwells the heart-shrine of your body-temple; therefore, your every movement is a divine activity.

In this inner shrine of your heart in the temple of your body, worship Him with the flowers of truthfulness, with the flowers of sincerity, with the flowers of honesty, with the flowers of loyalty to your vows, with the flowers of a guileless heart, a frank and simple-hearted disposition.

Worship Him with a life devoid of all crookedness, deceit and double-dealing. Worship Him with the flowers of straightforwardness, simplicity, purity and compassion. Worship Him with the flowers of a self-controlled life, with control of your senses.

These are the flowers that are dear to that Being who is the indweller of your heart, the sanctum sanctorum of this body-temple of yours. He does not desire costly ingredients for His worship. He is the overlord of countless worlds. He owns everything. What can you give Him? There is nothing that doesn't belong to Him.

But your ego belongs to you, your heart belongs to you, your life belongs to you. If you offer your heart, your ego, your life as a flower at His feet, then indeed His grace will flow into you. For He delights, rejoices and finds intense pleasure when He is offered the flowers of truthfulness, forgiveness, compassion,

simplicity, guilelessness, where there is no deviousness, no double-talk, no concealment and no human cleverness.

These are all despicable from the point of view of the spiritual ideal of a saint or a man of wisdom. These are the devices of the cunning and crooked, the dishonest and cheats. Therefore, these despicable devices do not become the dignity of a spiritual personality. They do not become of a *sannyasi* (a monk, one who has embraced the life of complete renunciation) a *sadhaka* and a devotee of God who has chosen God as his highest value.

When these prevail, when these are not eradicated through introspection, self-examination, and prayer, they act as a brake in your spiritual life. You stop proceeding further. You may be living a spiritual life for ten, twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years, but you will be where you are, because you are shackled to your earthly imperfection, to your human defects and foibles – you are not seeking to progress in divinity. That is the tragedy of spiritual life – to miss the way.

In our Vedic way of life, our entire life style is pervaded by the concept of *dharma*. Whatever you are, in whatever context, you have a certain *dharma* to fulfill. And for you who have become aware through the teachings of the Guru that your real identity is divinity, to be true to what you really are and to manifest your real identity in your life by living a divine life, by thinking divinely, speaking divinely, acting divinely, living divinely – that is your *dharma*. You are meant to express outside what you are inside.

And if you know that you are part of *Paramatma* (the Supreme Self) – you are *jivatma*, part of *Paramatama*, that you are divine, that divinity is your real identity, then it becomes your *dharma*, your *svadharma* (one's own prescribed duty in life according to the eternal law), to live to manifest what you are. To be what you are is your *svadharma*, to be contrary to it is to move away from truth.

To be true to the teachings of your Gurudev is truthfulness. To deviate from the teachings of your Gurudev is falsehood. To be

true to the solemn vows you have taken is truthfulness. To give up such vows is to live a life of falsehood.

Truth pervades every activity of our life within and without. Therefore, ponder deeply on the all-pervasive presence of the principle of truth in your own life – inner and outer, subjective and objective, individual and collective – and worship that great Being that shines with the strength of a million Suns in your heart-shrine, with the flower of truth! That is the highest worship, and that is your greatest duty!

## SEVA – RELATING TO OTHERS

May the divine grace of the supreme Eternal Reality, the one reality behind ever-changing names and forms, enable you to become firmly established in the noble ideals and divine principles that you have adopted for living your chosen way of life and in the lofty spiritual qualities which are required and are indispensably necessary to become firmly established in the sublime spiritual life. May His divine grace enable you to develop the inner spiritual strength necessary to cultivate successfully the noble divine qualities like calmness of mind, control of senses, endurance, self-withdrawal, faith and proper concentration, discrimination, dispassion and a burning desire for liberation.

And may the grace of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji make it possible for you to not only be firmly established in these sublime divine qualities, but also to effectively apply them in living your day-to-day life, in your daily thinking, feeling, speech and actions. May Gurudev's *guru-kripa* (grace of the spiritual teacher) grant you the insight and wisdom to effectively adhere to and apply these noble principles and divine qualities in your relationship with life around you, with your fellow beings whom you have to deal with in the practical living of your life in the *vyavaharic* field.

Idealism is one thing. Idealism becoming a living force in your day-to-day life, in your being and doing, in the manner in which you relate yourself to your fellow beings in the field of daily *vyavahara* (actions), that becomes another thing. That becomes

practical idealism. That becomes applied divinity, in action. This is more difficult because it encounters various adverse factors and obstacles. It also encounters the formidable obstacle of your mind's refusal to give way to higher principles in preference to lesser principles. This is because the mind sometimes has its own attachments, whims and fancies, and it has fallen in love with certain lesser ways of expressing itself. It clings to them; it does not want to leave them.

There is an essential unwillingness of the mind to change, sometimes obstinacy, sometimes even obduracy. Therefore, great wisdom, earnestness and sincere application are necessary in order to bring the mind around, recreate it and to cultivate in ourselves a new mind. It is regeneration. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji used a significant saying: "Die to live." The old has to die and give place to the new in your interior. It is in dying to the little self that one attains to everlasting life.

It is very difficult task. You can suppress the mind. You can repress it. You can keep it in check. But to make it die, so that it forever leaves off its old inveterate tendencies and consents to become totally new, that is very difficult task. For the mind is always propelled by a basic delusion, a basic ignorance. A Hindi *bhajan* (devotional song) contains the line: *Man mara, maya na mari:* "I thought I had killed my mind, but I had not yet killed my delusion, my *Maya*, my spiritual ignorance. Therefore I found that the mind is still there. It appeared to be dead, but it is still there, because it is propelled from my inside by this great illusory and delusory force."

Everyone knows the great adage: "Then shall I be free, when I shall cease to be," but we do not recognize its truth, its validity and its importance. We do not recognize its worth in our life, its central place in our *sadhana*. So we know everything, yet we live in ignorance. We have all the knowledge, yet we cling to ignorance. That is why we weep and wail, we fight and quarrel. We bring upon ourselves various types of afflictions, disappointments,

disillusionments, sorrows and griefs, not knowing that the key is simple. We can rise above all of them if we refuse to give importance to this ego-consciousness, this "so and so" false non-entity and become established in the truth of our being.

Yet, even though this is said a hundred times, we fail to recognize this truth. The divine illusion of mind, made up of the three qualities of nature, is difficult to cross over. Difficult it is to understand, for it is so subtle, so elusive and so effective, that knowing, yet one does not know. One lives in ignorance. Seeing, yet one does not perceive. One still remains blind. Hearing, yet one does not really understand. One pays no attention to what one hears. Therefore, even though hearing, one still fails to understand what is being said.

This is the subtle working of *Maya*, which wants to preserve this personality, which deserves to be liquidated and not preserved. Yet its preservation is the most important business of life for the vast number of individuals that go to make up human society. Fortunate indeed are the microscopic few who clearly recognize that our main problem is ourselves, our *samsara* lies within us, our bondage lies within us, not outside. Others are not our problem. We are more our problem than all others put together. This indeed is to be pondered, to be grasped, to be understood and known, and this indeed has to be dealt with one day or another, if you are to transcend yourself and attain your true status, your divine identity. One day it has to be done. Until that time, we shall still be carefully nourishing and preserving our problems, we shall be carefully perpetuating our bondage and protecting our troubles.

Think deeply. Cursory reflection will not take you into that which alone can make you realize the truth of the reality. It is only deep thinking that will bring you face to face with this central truth of your present situation, that you are presently established in a limited, separate human consciousness, a "so and so" consciousness, and 'such and such" consciousness. Deep reflection will be necessary to realize the actual nature of your present conscousness, deep and constant reflection.

Therefore, we invoke the grace of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, to enable us to become well aware of the state of our inner consciousness, to enable us to deal with the situation the way it is, and become established in our true Self, to rise and go beyond our lesser self and to make our ground a dimension of our true Self, our divinity.

Then alone divine life starts. Then alone divine life is possible. Otherwise, *Maya* deludes us into thinking that we have already lifted our consciousness into a higher plane, while keeping us firmly established in our plane of the I-consciousness. So it is difficult to understand the very subtle workings of *maya* unless we are constantly after it with in-depth thinking, reflection and reasoning. Therefore, they say, you must have keen, actively-exercised discrimination as your constant companion day by day. Great is the need to supplement our devotion with keen, analytical, critical reasoning. *Bhakti, jnana* (knowledge, wisdom of the Reality or Brahman) and *vairagya* (dispassion, indifference towards sensual objects and enjoyments born as a result of spiritual discrimination) – all three have to go together.

Bhagvaan Ji had been an outstanding scholar in the right sense of the term, with a towering intellect. Due to his great insight and great spiritual awakening within, he was able to put away his ambition and scholarship and conquer the ego – a very difficult task indeed. If you have conquered the ego, you have conquered *samsara* (life through repeated births and deaths), you have overcome bondage, and you have liberated yourself.

"Then shall I be free when I shall cease to be." This "I" which is so dear to everyone, which is the most important thing in the whole world for everyone, which one does not want to let go of, it is this that really constitutes your problem and it creates problems for others also.

And it is to solve this problem that all philosophies have come up. All the great saints, all the great teachers, have laboured only in order to teach us, to enable us to overcome this little "I".

It is inveterate and very difficult indeed to recognize in its true colours. All the philosophies exist only in order to debunk this "I". All systems and schools of philosophy exist to make us see this truth clearly that "I" is your real problem. It is not an easy joke. You have to become a real philosopher, you have to become a real *yogi*, in order to recognize this subtlest of all subtle truths.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji bless you. His grace is necessary. His *kripa* (grace) is necessary and our willingness to face facts is necessary. Our willingness to recognize the truth when we see it is necessary.

## SEE BHAGAVAAN GOPINATH JI IN ALL

To know Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is the only way of becoming liberated; there is no other way. Worshipful homage unto that Indweller who is seated within the hearts of each one of you, to whom your bodies are moving temples! May you ever be in the awareness that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is within and without, and, therefore, may all your dealings be worthy of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji who pervades you and surrounds you. May they be worthy of the Divinity that is imminent in all of creation.

All life is sacred. Therefore, deal reverentially with all beings. All beings are repositories of the Divine, because He is the Presence within. Recognize Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's Presence. Conduct yourself in a lofty and sublime manner. Be kind to all. Be respectful and just to all. Honour the sanctity, purity and holiness of each and every living being. Be pure in thought, word and deed. Harbour good thoughts, noble, sublime thoughts, goodwill and good wishes towards all your fellow beings. Be polite and courteous in your day-to-day dealing with others. Do not bear ill-will towards anyone. Do not bear a grudge towards anyone. Do not taunt anyone. Do not backbite or carry tales. All these go against the basic concept that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji dwells in all people.

All people are deserving of our reverence, respect and goodwill. Honour the individuality of others. Not without reason did Lord Krishna wash the feet of the guests who came to attend

the *yajna* (ceremonial sacrifice) of Yudhishthira. Not without reason did Lakshmana never lift up his face and look at Mother Sita. Not without reason did Sri Ramakrishna go and sweep the hut of a harijan. The living presence of God in all beings should be the basis of our attitude and behaviour towards others; our approach to the world.

The great Tulsidas has given the whole of what has been mentioned above saying: *Siyaramamaya sab jag jani, karaun pranam jori juga pani:* "I bow with my folded hands, knowing that this whole world is pervaded by my *istha devta*, Sita and Rama." And, Arjuna experienced this when the glorious vision of the Cosmic Form was bestowed upon him as stated in the eleventh chapter of the Gita. Beholding the Cosmic Form, Arjuna could do nothing but go on bowing, bowing, bowing, filled with awe and reverence. He did not know where to bow; everywhere he looked, he saw only God. So he bowed in all the ten directions. He said: "I bow to Thee in the front, in the back, to the right, to the left, above, below, on all sides. I bow to Thee everywhere – *sarvatah pani padam* (with hands and feet everywhere)."

This should be the basis of the vision, it should be the approach, the attitude, the behaviour of the true, sincere, spiritual seeker and aspirant who really wants to attain the cosmic vision in and through one's life, who does not set the vision aside only for the period of his special study and meditation and reflecting "Oh yes, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is everywhere."

Vedanta is not meant for your study place or your meditation room; it is meant for the field of your daily activity, in dealing with others and in serving mankind. This should be the vision. This should be the truth upon which you base your life. This should be your inner feeling, attitude. For the sake of the sentiments of others, you may keep it within yourself; you may not demonstrate it, or it may also become an ego-trip. It is not necessary that others know, but all throughout your waking state, in the midst of *vyavahara*, this awareness should be there: "I am in God, God is

within all. I am dealing with God; the whole thing is heightened by this Presence." One should always have the attitude of unity.

See God in every face, and then do your service as the worship offerd to the God who is within all beings. This is not merely the basis of *karma yoga*. This is the declaration of the Upanishads: "Wherever you go He is there – Everywhere He is here."

May God and Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji shower grace and blessings upon you and make you realize this truth and live in the awareness of this truth each and every day of your life. This is my humble supplication at the Feet of God as also Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji.

No matter whether you may forget it a hundred times, a thousand times, make up your mind to never lose sight of this inner awareness, this practice of the presence of the universal awareness. Make it one of the important *abhyasas* (practices) in daily life. Hold on to it. One day you will succeed; it will become natural for you. Until that, never leave it. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji (BAB) bless you!

**Ashwani Kaul**

## CHAPTER – V

# I CONSCIOUSNESS - KNOWING THE SELF

'Consciousness' derived from Latin conscins cosnscire, to know, would literally, mean 'development of awareness of one's identity and potential'. And the 'I', the word used in mentioning oneself, is the object of self-consciousness. The desire to know oneself has been the principal focus of man since his descent on the earth. All human activity, directly or indirectly, is involved and centered, in this or that form towards this main axis, be it a scientific exploration or any other human endeavour to know what 'I' can achieve both from the so-called inert matter and what lies within me. This natural quest is inherent in man and not derived from any other extraneous factor. This makes the existence of man unique as compared to the over all manifestation of the 'Divine' into *prasara* (diffusion/extension), into *vibhuti* (super-human power/energy). The oft-quoted aphorism in Kashmiri *Cenavani ho ditsmas* is very significant which, when roughly translated, would mean "I kindled his consciousness."

This obviously means that the word used for a subject in Saiva terminology, namely *Pramata* is derived from prama which means consciousness or correct knowledge, and that would establish the theorem of *Prameya* which literally means measurable. All the three words of *Pramata, Prameya* and *Pramana* are closely linked in Saiva philosophy round which has centered the discourse of the Saivacaryas. It would be beyond the scope of this chapter to enter into details, sidetracking the main issue of *Caitanya* or *Caitanyam Atma.*

If *atma* is *Cittam*, why is it that it wanders in wombs (*atate*), by taking up the activities of *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*? The reason is clear and may be summed up in one word *citabhasa* (the soul not free from impurities).

As *citta* includes *buddhi* (ascertaining intelligence), *ahamkara* (I-feeling, ego) and *manas* (mind) and is filled with the deposits of

experiences of objects (*vasana*), the *atma* wanders in wombs by taking up the activities of *sattva*, etc. and by ignorance of its own nature as being pure consciousness. His real nature, as stated above is *caitanya*. Being *citta* by nature, yet it is an *anu* (small/atomic) because of decreased knowledge (*jnanam bandah*), the knowledge that is associated with the form of experiences of pleasue and pain, indifference, illusion, etc. Thus, imprisoned in *puryastaka* (the name of the *linga deha* in Saiva schools) he enters *samsara*. So when by the *Maya Sakti* of Siva the knowledge of illumination is not born or is restricted, the *atma* gets limited by *kancukas* [the five evolutes of *Maya*, five coverings: *niyati* (the power that limits the universal condition of all-pervasivenss or omnipresence); *kaala* (the power that limits the universal condition of eternal existence); *raga* (the power that limits the universal condition of completeness) and *kalaa* (the power that limits the universal condition of omnipotence); *vidya* (the power that limits the universal power of omniscience) and he identifies them with his real nature. The ignorance with regard to the *tattvas* begins from *kala* (*kaladinam tattvanam aviveko maya*) and man forgets that they are really distinct from him. *Maya* is the *tattava* (thatness, the basic principle) above the *pancakancuka* and the source of all these. *Mantrasadbhava* puts it thus: He whose consciousness is shaken *kala*, sees objects by *vidya*, is coloured. When by His *Maya Sakti* the knowledge of illumination is not born, he is in bondage and is subjugated to the bondage of *Maya*. In the *spanda* (vibration) too this is indirectly referred to. "Those of unenlightened *buddhi* endeavour to conceal their nature". The destruction of these *kalas* is essential so that the body (*para*) is dissolved on the final attainment of *moksa*.

The separation from the elements is *pratyaharana* (restraining the organs of sense in yoga philosophy; the drawing away of *citta* from them). It is said that "when the *citta* moves in the heart and the *manas* which runs after sense object, is confined in the navel, it is *pranayama*." By the independence of the elements is meant pure, independent consciousness, apart from them. This is acquired without effort by one who is engaged in *sambhavopaya*. And the

same is acquired with much effort by means of *anvopay*. As the knowledge of the truth is obscured, one has to find the place of *pranayama* (lit. restraining the breath), *dharana* (steady abstraction of the mind), *pratyahara* (restraining the organs of sense), *samadhi* (deep meditation). *Pranayama* leads to the giving up the characteristics of the gross body (*prana*, etc.), then the interior subtle one is reached the *spanda* (vibration) the supreme that is beyond the subtle. Hence this is called *pranayama*. Giving up the functions of *gunas* (qualities born of Nature), sound, etc. that are experienced by the mind, one should enter the supreme abode through it. This is called *pratyahara* that cuts off the noose of *samsara*. Next comes *dhyana* (meditation). Transcending the qualities of *buddhi*, meditating on that which is beyond meditation on the self-luminous: this the wise call as *dhyana*.

And that by which one is always steadied in the supreme *atma* is called *dharana*, that puts an end to the noose of *samsara*. As for the elements in oneself and others and in the world the *samadhi* (finity in thought/deep meditation): "I am Siva, I am secondless" is the supreme state.

It is the endless extension of the conquest of *moha* (delusion) that leads to the acquisition of *sahajavidya* and ultimately to the ending of *samsara*. As a consequence all the *samskaras* (mental impressions) deposits of *karma* are entirely destroyed. This *sahajavidya* (true knowledge) means the knowledge of beginningless *dharma*. According to *svacchanda*, the web of bondage is endless. After transcending cognition caused by bondage, one cognizes the essence. This is *atmavyapti* (realization of the Self without realization of the all-inclusive Shiva-nature).

*Sivavyapti* is other than this. When one thinks of the objects possessing the qualities of omnipotence, etc. as operative, that is *Sivavyapti*, the cause of *caitanya*. It is said that the conquest of *moha* leads to *atmavyapti* and the *unmana* is attained (lit. raising or lifting up), which is *Sivavyapti*, the *sahajavidya*. From determination, the knowledge called *unmana* gets permanently

established. It is the supreme *vidya*. Once having acquired it, one at once gets the supreme character of omniscience that explains the beginningless *dharma*, teaches of the *paramatma* and leads to the stage of *paramatma*. Hence it is v*idya*; he manifests the light supreme, the supreme cause.

As in *Sivasutravimarsini jagrat dvitiyakarah*: Wakeful, having the second as his rays (*karah*). If one who has attained the *Suddhavidya*, takes care to keep steady in it, he becomes one who has as his rays the world, which is the second to *ahanta* (I-ness), *purana-vimarsa* unlimited consciousness. It is called *idanta* (this-ness) and which manifests itself as the Known. It means the universe appears to him as his rays. "Whenever through the senses, the consciousness of the Lord manifests itself says *Vijnanabhairava*, that has the nature of *tanmatra*." Hence it becomes dissolved in consciousness. *Sarvamangala* mentions *Sakti* and possessor of *Sakti*' are to Him all the world and *Mahesvara* or the possessor of *Sakti*.

Of him who is determined in investigating his own nature, *atma* is a *nartaka*. It assumes various disguises, for instance, *jagrat*, etc. His activity is just a sport, rooted on his own real nature and concealed within himself. Bhagavaan Gopinath is an instance of this. The universe appeared to him as his rays and the vibrations (*spanda*) from him reached all directions. Though in a mortal frame, he was yet out of it. One might say he was *prakasa punja* (lit. a heap of light) and all-consciousness epitomised in a liberated soul.

The eyes and other sense organs of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji introspectively see as the real nature of a *yogi* does, the nature of the manifesting drama of the world within and the *indriyas* (sense-organs) looking inside rather than outside. Seeing the *atma* within with inturned eyes he enjoyed immortality. He was a *jivanamukta* who had attained the *sattva* of illumination. He was steeped in *aham vimarsa* who had obtained the power of independence. As in the body where his self got manifested, so in all other places where he concentrated himself, that power was produced, the power of

*sakti*. Ever meditating by means of introspection, he always bathed in the tank of bliss. This tank is the Supreme Ocean of Immorality. In it did he not only bathe but sank also the limitations of knowledge due to his body. His consciousness saw the entire world as play (*lila*). He was always fixed in *samadhi* and was certainly *ajivana mukta*. I am reminded of a *pratyabhijna* sutra which says, he who carries the drama of the universe (*samsara*), who is awake, when the world sleeps (*pralaya*) is the one *Parmesvara* (here the one Bhagavaana).

To a person being in *pasu-bhava* (a *jiva*) what can one say about Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. One's vision is limited like the ant that, moving over the edge of a football, its circumference closed to view, is unconscious about the object she is temporarily moving on. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is not seated on any celestial throne. There are no *vidyadharas* floating above him. His constant companions are the *chilum* (clay tobacco-pipe) and the *dhooni*, the blazing flames of which arise to burn the defilements caused by *avidya*. As an integral part of the cosmic vision, he is drawn into it by his I-consciousness, the light of Intelligence. His is not in an ordinary *samadhi*. It is the magnetic ardour of the one, who in his dreamy state (so it appears to us), is fully established in, what the *siddhas* call 'the seekers range of consciousness'.

One can do no better than paraphrase the poem of Paramhansa Yogananda that conveys a glimpse of such *samadhi*. The 'dim sensory image' is gone for the *siddha* (Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji) who is drawn inward. There are no sheaths of love, hate, health, disease, life, death: these false shadows have ceased that once appeared on the screen of duality, the storm of *Maya* is stilled; it has been rendered inactive by his deep intuition. Ever awake as he is the present, past and the future no more exist for him. He is I, I everywhere, ever present and all-flowing I. He is engaged in meditation of the nature of *Caitanya, Cidrasa*. He manifests the illumination of knowledge and the known with the light of himself. He is the one whose consciousness sees the whole as a play. There

is no bondage of birth, etc. As stated elsewhere, being always fixed in *samadhi* (the state of superconsciousness where Absolute is experienced, attended with all-knowledge and joy, Oneness), he is certainly a *jivanamukta* (liberated while living), for him there is no union with bodies and organs. The shackles of *karma* producing ignorance and pain are gone. In *Mrtyujita* it is stated thus, "Having seen by the divine path of yoga the state beyond the three *tattvas* (*atma-tattva, vidyatattva, sivatattva*) eternal, changeless, permanent one is not again born." To quote Paramhansaji again: "Everything is transmuted, from a particle of universal dust to anger, good, bad, salvation, lust, to a vast ocean of blood of 'my' (one's) own being. Everything ultimately bursts into immortal flames of bliss. Thou art I, I am Thou, knowing, knower, known, as one! Tranquilled, unbroken thrill, eternally living ever-new peace. The bliss of samadhi is enjoyed every moment. The grosser lights vanish into eternal rays of all-pervading bliss. I, in everything, enter the Great Myself. The flickering shadows of mortal memory are gone. He sees eternity and 'I' one as united ray of cosmic consciousness. 'A tiny bubble of laughter, I am become the sea of Mirth (Merriness Delight) Itself.

As a steersman of a mercantileship, the *samyatrika* (the merchant sailor), looks to the baggage of the merchandise and the crew as one who is fully awake. He ships the oars in harmony, in correspondence with its constituent parts, the mast, etc. so that it sails on an even keel. Just as he is directed or follows a course in answer to the helm, so does a *jivanamukta* act in the daily round of human activities as a liberated soul. His 'I-Consciousness' bestows the divine experience of Cosmic Consciousness on disciples that have a sufficiently strengthened mind and are not overwhelmed by the vistas of a past or future vision. The practitioner of meditation is alert and awake to receive the grace of "I-Consciousness'. His *bhakti* is adequately enlarged. He is capable of absorbing the liberating shock of omnipotence. That is how Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji enlarges himself.

But that is not so in the case of lay devotees. To them follows the *vibhuti* (the ashes) from the *chillum* and the *dhooni* which again is an indissoluble part of the same 'I-Consciousness'.

In the microcosm of his inner being is reflected (*abhasita*), the macrocosm (*bhasamana-jagat*) on a miniature scale. What a wonderful laboratory, a portrait gallery of the most extraordinary phenomenon of 'I-Consciousness'. The *yogi* is all the time aware of what is going on and how nature manifests itself in various forms. The colourful universe with all its hues and each particle of its universal dust shines in beauty and elegance. To an awakened soul even the ugliest phenomenon, that appears repulsive, is a ray of light emanating from the divine, distorted and refracted in the course of its mysterious travel. Nothing is abhorrent, nothing is repulsive. It is all the *Maya* of the divine. Does not a seed sprout in the dense cover.of dead leaves and excrement? Does not a lotus (*sarasija/pankaja*) emerge out of mud? Doesn't an embryo develop out of blood? Transmutation comes in different forms. The seed is there. Holy and bloody are the outcome of clouded human vision. They correspond and converge at some point of interaction. Our sensibilities may be sharpened by what is sublime and get blunted by what is revolting. The source of both is the same, 'I consciousness' or the 'light of Intelligence', duality in unity, unity in duality. *Dvandas* (opposites) co-exist. In the realm of 'I-Consciousness' all shadows of distinction and differentiation evaporate and vanish like clouds.

The whole *samsara* is light divine, seen in different perspectives. It may seem rather illogical and unsound to suppose that the same 'I-Consciousness' in its gross form drives a criminal to acts of what seem to us nothing short of brutality and depravity, as in its highly refined and illuminated state it leads to bliss and illimitable joy. In one state it is dormant and covered by dense layers of impurities like a foggy sky, in another it is 'sharpened sensibility' that unfolds itself into the realms of the divine. Like a cocoon, the silk-worm, when out of its shell, turns into a thread later woven into a fine fabric/mosaic of colourful patterns. Likewise,

a hardened criminal, a blood thirsty *raksasa*, when its latent *vasanas* are 'scrubbed clean' shines into a brilliant gem that radiates luster. Why is this so? Why this change and transformation? The 'I-Consciousness' in one is in its most gross form lying dormant and submerged in *avidya*, but the same, when highly sharpened, illuminates the self that has been veiled and obscured by the mighty wind of *maya*. Roughly it may be compared to the bellows of an iron-smith whose constant bellowing turns hard and unrefined iron into metals of myriad and wonderful shapes. That is the underlying mystery of the hidden and obscured 'I-Consciousness', the purifying fire and life-giving fire of 'I-Consciousness. Psychologist David-Steinde-Rast clarifies it like this: Our spiritual moments are those moments when we feel most intense, alive and aware. The fire of suffering gets transformed into the light of consciousness.

The *Svacchanda Tantra* very lucidly talks of the yogis 'I-Consciousness' thus: "As in the body where the *yogi's* self is manifested, so in all other places where he concentrates himself, that power is produced. He lives always independent and independent." In the *Spanda* too (Karika 7): "That *tattva* has to be examined with effort and earnestness, whence his independence, unopposed and omnipotent." He should concentrate on the Seed (*bija*), that is the cause of the universe of the nature of illumination, *parasakti*. On the Seed, that is the *ParaSakti*, frequent concentration of the *citta* (perception/the mind) should be made. This is *avadharana* (determination, affirmation). This would roughly correspond to what we ordinarily but solemnly say, "Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom." It is a sincere admission of conscientious suffering, and a firm awareness of what "I am", all the more acute in a *yogi* of exalted power and omniscience. And Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is one of them (those *yogis*).

He has to stay spotless in his mental sky below, ahead and above, what Paramahansa Yogananda calls "eternity and I, one united ray."

To such a *yogi* salvation is not the final and only goal of life. Perceiving that human life is beset with sorrow, he embarks on a mission to eradicate ignorance that envelops his mortal frame. He helps the *jiva* (*pasu*) to rise above all sense identifications and re-unite with him. At a lower level the *jiva*, in his physical and mental pain, approaches his Guru to relieve him of all types of ailments. The Guru unhesitatingly and unfailingly assumes the role of a physician (*vaidya*) to see that the disciple is relieved of all his *vaikalpas* (defects or agitation) caused by his limited understanding. Call what you may, a magician or a miracleman, the Guru acts as a mascot to relieve the distress of those that earnestly desire to cross ashore the *samsara* of *Maya* and *moha*.

The self-realized *yogi* shares the joy of illumination with those that seek emancipation from endless desire and false pleasures. That is why it is said of him "as there, so elsewhere (*yatha tatra tatha anyatra*)". He lives always independent. This is what makes Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji so unique and so radiant. Apparently robed like an ordinary householder, in his traditional costume with nothing to distinguish him from other Pandits, he is the one who has realized the self and objectified his own experience of self-realization. It would be most appropriate to note what the seer poet Wordsworth in his intuition, once wrote in his Ode : Intimations of Immortality,

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:

The soul that rises with us, our life's star, hath had elsewhere its setting, and cometh from afar :

Not in entire forgetfullness, and not in utter nakedness.

But trailing clouds of glory do we come from God, who is our home."

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji belongs to all ages. He has broken all chains of bondage. His experience of 'I-Consciousness' should inspire us all to realize the dream of freedom, *svatantrya – svabhava*, or what the Vedas says: *Tat tvam asi*: Our fulfillment.

This is what to Milton and Pope was empyreal – formed of pure fire or light. Shall we live up to that ideal of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji? Shall we awake from our long slumber to see our true nature: 'independent'? Conscientiously performing his work in the *ashrama*, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was yet immersed in an inward beatitude. One could find him in unspeakable rapture. And outwardly he was calm and serene; perhaps he watched the little ego floating in Me (him).

It is significant to note that poet after poet in Europe has referred to the spiritual decay of man and death – like life. The themes of sterility and the lack of emotional and spiritual vitality are common to the novels and poems of the twenties. Man has to find where lies the answer in a mechanical commercialized civilization or recognizing the self, U-consciousness; the individual experience his 'I-Consciousness'.

**Prof. V.N. Drabu**

*Note*

As already stated in the Chapter on Gospel of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, emphasis has been laid by him on two aspects of human existence. These two aspects are *sadhana* or seeking, and *seva* or service.The first aspect is highly individualistic and involves spiritual exercise to know the ultimate Truth. A number of techniques and methodologies have been in vogue since time immemorial in relation to this spiritual exercise. A seeker has to select one of these techniques, which may suit his acumen and caliber. In making this selection the seekers often take the guidance of their preceptors. This exercise, whatever the methodology adopted, leads the seeker to realising the self and raises him to a level where he is endowed with a state of 'I' consciousness. The learned writer, Prof. Drabu has explained this 'I' consciousness as emphasized by Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji also, in detail with reference to the stipulations in Kashmir Shaiva Philosophy.

— ***Editor***

## CHAPTER VI

# THOUGHT AND THOUGHTFUL

## *VICHAR AUR VICHARAVAN*

Modern psychologists consider the thinker, knower and perceiver as one with thoughts. They say that the thoughts are conscious of themselves. But that cannot be held true. When we analyze our own being deeply, we will find that we are looking at our thoughts, as we would look at external objects. We then separate ourselves from the thoughts. We are outside of our thoughts. It is not, therefore, true that thought is conscious of itself. Thought is first like an image that comes to our mind and thus thought becomes an object of our consciousness. It is actually we who are conscious of the thought. One thought might pass and another thought might take its place. So we become like by-stander. The more we go deep into our own beings, the more we find that there is something, which is not empirical ego or me but that is a pure ego which is 'I' and there is also a relation between the empirical ego and the pure ego which, in other words means the relation between the *jivatman* and *Parmatman*. The pure ego is that which knows and thinks. When pure ego is clothed by thoughts it becomes a thinker. When it is clothed with the garments of emotions and feelings, it becomes a feeler and when it is clothed with the garments of the sense powers and is connected with the power of perceiving, it becomes a perceiver. In short, we can say that our inner most core is behind, and there is something as a medium in us, which is finer matter in vibration. We may call these finer particles of matter as electrons or proto electrons which are always in vibration. In Hindu philosophy, it is called the finer ethernal particles (*sukshama bhuta* or *akas-tanmatra*). These finer particles are vibrating with a tremendous speed and are transparent.

Our personality depends upon ego head. We cannot separate the sense of 'I' from the sense of 'me'; and that is our personality. There is something like a string in a garland or a necklace of pearls.

The little pearls may be compared to our states of consciousness or units of sensation and there is a string that goes through each one of them and holds them together. That string is not visible from outside. It is like that string of our own self which can be called our individuality holding our units of sensations together and making them a complete whole. So this individuality forms the background of our personality. Our individuality holding our units of sensations together and making them a complete whole. Our individuality does not change in the midst of all changes. It is our pure self of pure ego. It is the source of consciousness. Our individuality is immortally related whereas our personality is something changeable. The individuality is the greater self. By greater self we mean the cosmic ego. At the time of death we leave a porton of personality here and that is the physical body which is destroyed. Our personality splits. We take another portion of our personality, the ideas, thoughts, feelings, emotions and the experience that we have gathered during our life time. The individuality is the background of that too. Our individuality is our true self. Our true self, by its birthright is part and parcel of the Infinite Being. We cannot die. So we need not be afraid of death. We should not be elated when anybody praises us. We should not be attached to our clothes or to anyone around us. That is called bondage. Bondage makes us slaves and then we forget our real individuality, which is always free.

German philosopher Fichte has rightly said that thoughts are the product of thinking and there must be a thinking principal, which thinks and the product of thinking is thought and one becomes conscious of the thought and our minute analysis needs us to find that we are looking at a thought as if we look at an external object. Hence the focus is on thought content. Thought creates energy. If thought is negative then the energy is negative which creates pain. A hurt body tries its best to sustain pain. It is a matter of survival. So it loves to attract pain and sustain pain. The hurt body uses logic to protect pain. Unhappy people convince us in living a miserable life. So a need arises to create a bliss body

in us. There are layers within us so far as our body is concerned. These are the physical body, the pranic body or the breath body, the mental body, the intellectual body and the bliss body. All these bodies in us have energies. The energy is in potential form like latent fire in wood. We can awaken the physical body through *yogic* exercise, meditation and balanced diet. When the body in its entirety is kept alive and enthusiastic, it will then kindle a happy energy throughout. The pranic or the breath body has to be awakened. By breathing deeply and by doing pranayama one finds a different kind of joy within. The mental body can be thus awakened by practising *yoga* and adopting calm. A noisy mind is an avenue for energy leakage. In deep sleep bliss body opens up naturally. In the waking state if one is committed to be happy and learns to look at life as a celebration, the bliss centre is awakened. However, if one has tapped all the five layers within oneself, one will overflow with joy. The relationship reaches to new heights when one opens one's body, *prana* (life breath), mind, intellect and bliss centres. There is a saying that belief creates biology. In other words, our physical body can be described as the manifestation of emotions. We are such stuff as dreams are made of. In short, our every body cell is influenced by the way we think and feel. Our thoughts, emotions and feelings all get stored up in the vibration code of our cells. The human mind is thus like a double edged sword where its potentialities if mishandled can cause diseases. At the same time the effective utilization of its potentialities can help in eliminating anxieties, panic attacks and stress.

Lord Buddha taught his son Rahula to practise loving kindess to overcome anger. Loving kindess has the capacity to bring happiness to others without demanding anything in return. He also taught his son to practise sympathetic joy to overcome hatred. Sympathetic joy arises when one rejoices over the happiness of others and wishes others well being and success. Lord Buddha also talks about practising equanimity to overcome prejudice. Equanimity is looking at all things openly and equally and thus we need not reject one thing to chase after another.

The enemy of loving kindess is attachment because it creates insecure clinging, fear and the desire to control. Now when we talk about compassion we can say that its enemy is pity because pity is setting us apart from suffering around us.

Similarly, the enemy of sympathetic joy is compassion, checking whether we are more, the same or less than others in our position and approach. Lastly the enemy of equanimity is indifference because indifference is withdrawal, so these enemies need to be kept at bay. Rich thoughts bringing real happiness need to be allowed to find place in the arena of the mind. Thoughtfulness springs from meditaton, and meditation is possible only when silence is achieved. In silence more work can be done. The true experience of bliss is without words.

The word *sat* means being, *chit* means consciousness and *anand* means bliss or rapture. An ordinary man like us doesn't know whether his consciousness is proper or not. We also don't know whether what we know of our being is proper knowledge or not, but we know where our rapture is. So we need to hang on to rapture to bring for us both our consciousness and our being. Process of hanging on to rapture develops the quality of conversion in our personality enabling us to transform negative thoughts into positive ones. So to develop the quality of conversion within is to bring solace to mind. The peaceful mind thus brings eternal silence paving way for adopting meditation as a technique to achieve thoughtfulness.

Here we are reminded of a poem of a renowned Urdu poet Ismail Meerathi, of the early nineties. The poem is titled *Hamari Gaay*. One of the verses of the poem explains that the cow is a special kind of animal. It takes grass and in return it gives milk. In other words, the cow is divine. It is able to convert non-milk into milk. Most of us are battling stress. We need to learn a lesson from the cow. The spiritual personalities really adopt the cow habits in their affairs to destress themselves and thus convert the negative thoughts into positive ones.

The spiritualists are well versed in the art of anger management. They have the art of converting anger into forgiveness. Converting anger into peacefulness is the highest form of spirituality. The Gita – chapter 10, verse 11 envisages: "Out of compassion for them, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance."

Compassion literally means to feel with, to suffer with. Everyone is capable of compassion, and yet everyone tends to avoid it because it appears uncomfortable. Men of higher spiritual order never accept such avoidance and experience human pain with the intention of eradicating ignorance and sufferings. Lord Buddha has said, and I quote, "We are the cause of our sorrows. Respect for others and listening to others are the source of harmony and happiness. Happiness comes when our work and words are of benefit to ourselves and others. Joy comes not through possessions or ownership but through a wise and loving heart. Joy and openness come from our own contended heart."

Thus, the need is to control negative thoughts before they reach a stage where variegated ailments are formed. Negative thoughts can be controlled by managing the mind with the help of proper meditation techniques and that too with divine consent. The mystical effect of divine knowledge then churns out our positive tendencies, enabling us to extract the most out of our life. It trains and develops our mind in keeping thoughts which lead to action. Thoughts are the source of all actions. Thought is the real karma. Thinking is the real action. If we can root out all evil thoughts in the beginning, we will not do any evil action. The first and foremost of all thoughts is 'me'. If 'me' vanishes, 'you' and 'he' will disappear by automatically.

*Yoga* is the restraint of the mental modifications. It gives us the power of expelling the thoughts or if need be of killing them dead on the spot. Naturally the art requires practice of meditation. The expansion of thoughts of the mind towards objects is bondage. Renunciation of *sankalpa* (will) is liberation. It is the *vasana* (subtle

desire) in mind that causes attractions towards objects and brings about bondage. With the practice of *samatva* (eveness of mind, equanimity), *vasana* is destroyed. *Samatva* is *tyaga* (renunciation). The spiritualists develop the habit of *tyaga* by means of meditation. Their *antahakarna* (inner being) is cooler than ice whereas the *antahakarna* of a worldliman is blazing furnace.

Saints and seers of higher spiritual order know that the mind associated with *vasana* leads to bondage, while the mind absolutely free from *vasana* is said to be an emancipated one. They come out of the cages of the physical bodies victoriously, breaking the *vasanas* of the mind through constant *vichara* (enquiry into the nature of the Self, Brahman, Truth Absolute) and by constant meditation on *OM*. Mind is nothing but a bundle of *vasanas* and root cause of its emergence is the *ahankara* or the false 'I'. It is only the *sattvic* mind that kills the *ahankara*. The process of cognition on the basis of past *karmas* helps a mind to turn *sattvic*.

When there is desire, *raga* (attachment) and *dvesha* (aversion) exist side by side. *Raga* and *dvesha* in the mind is the real *karma*. *Yogis* destroy these two *krittis* (actions) by first killing all the thoughts in the mind to achieve thoughtlessness in the empty mind through the process of meditation.

Deep thinking needs intense *sadhana*. It takes so many births for the proper evolution of the mind. Then only it can think deeply and properly. A man who speaks the truth and has moral purity has always powerful thoughts. A *yogi* like Bhagavaan Gopinathji had a powerful thought and would speak a word which would produce tremendous impression on the minds of others. He would practise *nishkama karma yoga* purifying himself and healing the wounded minds of the people.

It is not necessary that a saint should appear on the scene to help the world to reach and to elevate the minds of the people. Some saints preach just by giving examples to those who surrender to them. The very life of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was an embodiment of teaching. His very sight elevated the minds of thousands. He

was a living assurance for others for God realization. No one could check his thought vibrations. His pure strong thought vibrations travelled a very long distance entering the minds of the people at various places. Sri Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's enlightening life on this earth can prove beyond any doubt that he was always in *samadhi*. His guidance in the everyday matter of life is a constant continuing reality as he has been realized by his disciples.

Sister Yonne, Australian devotee of Sri Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji penned down her mental experience most graphically when she said, "Recently in two visions I saw the picture of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji become a safe, holding untold treasures and secondly as a tunnel leading to glorious lights."

Philipp Simpfendorfer of Australia in one of his articles on Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji recorded his experience in these words, "In the dark of the night, somewhere beyond deep sleep, I sometimes glimpse awareness of his presence. He is not in human form, but his presence is unmistakable. Perhaps his body is in an energy field, perhaps in vibration. It touches one of my subtle bodies with light. I suspect that it touches the whole earth because the presence does seem to pervade some rocks and caves and canyons on the bush land property where I live. Several years ago when I knew more in his astral form, I asked where he really was and the reply was to the effect that "we are in the circle of the *Shaktis*". The reply is still an enigma to me. Does it mean he is like the hub of a wheel and his emanation like the spokes, connecting with the rim of powerful blessing as it whirls in energy paths across the earth? Nothing can block the waves of power. All nature receives its goodness as do receptive humans. To others it just passes through them. It is energy of infinite consciousness."

He has concluded with a remark that if all humanity lived in Bhagavaan Consciousness, all creation would be open to infinity.

Philip Simpfendorfer had a glimpse of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji during his meditation in February 1978. He told him that there

is a need for people who will stand like solid rocks against the forces of destruction. Such people are called guides of humanity. *Ashrams* need to be be likened with centres of power throughout the world so that the love and the circles of light for the well being of the entire world are ensured without interfering with religions. This incident took place after ten years of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's *mahanirvana* (leaving the mortal coil).

In 1986 Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji made himself visible in his astral form before Roymond Gordon of Sydney. Since then he and Yonne another Australian devotee who had a vision of Bhagvaanji, have been meditating on Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. Among his disciples and devotees are many who never saw him in his lifetime. In Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's room there used to be a stick with a horn like head as also a trident, *trishul.* He used to keep rosary of *Rudraksha* on the head of this stick. On certain occasions, he would wear this rosary himself. Stick is the symbol of discipline. He was particular about maintaining discipline in life. He often said that people of indiscipline get cursed before they get a chance to correct themselves.

Trident among other things is also the weapon in the hands of Lord Shiva inspiring us to concentrate upon him all the time. The rosary of *Rudraksha* is the symbol of *dhyana* (meditation). Being a great disciplinarian himself Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji would be thus totally engrossed most of the time in meditation concentrating perhaps on Lord Shiva.

His vigorous practice as *sadhak* created a philosopher (a *vicharak*) out of the extraordinary saint called Bhagavaan Gopinathji. Sri C.L. Moza has quoted Sri S.N. Fotedar as having revealed his interesting experience. He has imagined about the colour of the spiritual halo of his master, thinking that every prominent saint had a halo of his own. While sitting before him he saw a bluish halo encircling Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. The halo was visible for quite sometime and then slowly faded away. Incidentally blue is the colour of intelligence and wisdom that he referred to as *vichara.*

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji through his actions and preachings wanted us all to be *vicharvaan* or thoughtful.

As said, time and again Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji manifested his compassion and concern for his devotees many a time with the conviction of expecting every one to be good and doing good to everyone desirous to seek eternal bliss.

To illustrate this it may be stated that once a devotee came to him with a huge number of fresh lotus flowers brought from the Dal Lake. At his insistence Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji remained motionless. In fact, he went into *samadhi*, while the devotee decorated the master with these flowers from top to toe in his own choicest way. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji remained in this position for hours together to give the benefit of deriving supreme pleasure to his devotee. Again Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's hatred for lust was noticed throughout his life. Once there was a woman sitting before him. He started beating her with his long iron tongs, and chased her away. Returning to his seat he told others that the unchaste woman had visited two friends that morning and then had come to him steeped in sin. He felt happy whenever a celibate came to see him though he never asked a householder disciple or devotee to give up his wife and children in pursuit of self-realization.

Knowledge can be divided into two sets. One set is that derived by the intellect and the other set that gained by experience. The comprehensive way to meditation and penance is experience and not intellect. It is inherent in the nature of the intellect of an intellectual to argue whereas the practice of meditation does not involve the use of logic and intellect only as the touchstone but its path is paved with experience also. Bhagavaan Gopinathji had engaged himself more with the inner world. It was only then that there were major changes in his school age he had once gone to. Once one Sri Kaul, a devotee had gone to see Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji to seek his blessings. There he saw an elderly lady with her daughter entering the room. The daughter was suffering from an abnormal abscess on her breast and was having acute pain. She

fainted in the room. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was as usual puffing his *chillum* through a piece of cloth, with his eyes fixed on the sky and uttering some abuses through the window. He beckoned the lady to bring forth her daughter. He cut off a piece from the cloth used for puffing the *chillum* and asked her to place it on the swollen breast of her daughter. She was also given some holy ash to be applied on the wound later. Sri Kaul was later informed that soon thereafter the abscess got burst at her home, soiling profusely her clothes and bed and wound started healing up by and by.

Again Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji gave small packet of ashes from his *dhooni* to Sri Chuni Lal on a different occasion when his wife was diagnosed as suffering from leukaemia to be given to her in water with medicine. That night and on the following day she felt very hungry and was given milk and some other feed. Later when doctors checked her, they were amazed to see that there was no trace of the blood cancer as diagnosed earlier. Thus, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was one such saint who spent seventy years of his earthly life for the good of the people. As earlier said even after his *nirvana* in 1968, he continued to help, guide and inspire the people who deserve this favour. Even now he continues to bless his devotees, the faithful and deserving.

Bhagavaan Gopinathji through his idioms and expressions would make his devotees as well as visitors realize and accept that truth is life and life in truth is love of God. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji maintained that each individual carried his fate on his own person right from the time of his birth. After worshipping the Sun and the Moon, Lord Gopinath was heard chanting "Jai Shani Deva" while offering oblations into *dhooni*. Shani is Saturn and as per Hindu thought, Saturn knew that his son would be the ruler of the world. Those who had over the years come closer to Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji found him with a full vision of the past, present and the future.

To one of the questions of Justice J N Bhat as to how one can outwit fate, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji said that even Lord Rama

was no exception to this very human reaction. Setting off in search of the abducted Sita with no obvious clues to her whereabouts, Lord Rama fell into a state of deeper grief. Justice J N Bhat gave this information to Sri B.L. Kak, the journalist who has made mention of it in his book *Lord Gopinath: Brevity His Beauty.*

Bhagavaan Gopinathji was often found chanting *Tanmay Manah Sivsankalpumastu:* "May my mind ever lead me on to good thoughts and deeds." This verse in the 34th chapter of Yajurveda reminds the reader of the importance of human mind in achieving progress. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji saw to it that he too should highlight certain principles and requirements of Hindu *dharma.* Under it social duties are classified as *ashrama dharma* (duty of the stage of life, traditionally four: student, householder, forest-dweller, and renouncer), *varna dharma* (the duty of the respective classes: brahmin, warriors, merchants, and labourer) and *sadharana dharma.* Within *ashrama dharma* the needs of an individual are incorporated within the doctrine of four ends of life called *pursharthas* (ends to be striven for in life). These are *kama* (legitimate desires), *artha* (wealth), *dharma* (righteousness) and *moksha* (liberation). Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji did not have any negative opinion about *kama* (sex). He wound say that it is as natural for a human being as burning is to fire. But as with all natural phenomena, the law of balance has to be followed here as well.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji on more than one occasion was found talking of *poroozanam* (previous birth). He also used to refer to verse 47 in the Gita Chapter 2, *Karmanieva adhikarah te:* "you have the freedom to perform any action."

Karma is divided into two parts. They are *prarabdha* (destiny) and *purshartha* (free will or self effort). We reap what we sow. If things do not catch up with us in our lifetime, they would do so in another life. Any good we do in our lifetime will come back to us. If we are spiritually attuned, the good will return to us in this life. If not then we will experience good or bad in the next life. Cause and effect is related to *karma* as it means the consequences of our actions. We may escape the law but not our karma.

Bhagavaan Gopinathji was accessible to all and sundry barring of course those with lust for immoral sexual activity. He would watch people visiting him. Though introvert, he would pay individual attention to his devotees when they were in need of such an attention. In a very real sense he was to each of his devotee, their own personal, divine friend. Sometimes he would take away even a stranger from a particular assignment simply to meet him his spiritual need. Madhava Ji Koul Sathoo narrates that during the year 1945, Bhagavaan Gopinathji was residing in Dalhasanyar Mohalla Srinagar. One day during that year when he was as usual returning to his home after paying his respects to Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, he met a Seth who had come from some place outside Kashmir. A local Kashmiri Pandit was accompanying the Seth. He enquired from Madhavji where Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was residing. So Sri Madhavji accompanied him to Bhagavaan Gopinath Jis' place. After prostrating before Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, the Seth presented to him a sealed bottle of whisky, about five tolas of charas and one ball of about 1½ tola weight of blackish grey colour of pure opium. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji broke this ball into two pieces. One half was further broken into small pieces which he placed in his mouth, followed by a cup of whisky and finished eating the one piece of opium and whisky. Seeing this the Seth became panicky thinking that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji would collapse forthwith and wanted to leave immediately. He asked Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji for permission to leave. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji smiled and told him that he had to stay with him for the night. Sethji stayed on and soon Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji broke the second piece of opium into small pieces, placed them in his mouth and drank rest of the whisky directly from the bottle. The music which was on, continued and the meal was ready. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji had not taken any food for the previous four days and so he broke his fast and he, Sethji and all those present there had the meals together.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji continued to listen to the music for the whole night with occasional puffs at his *chillum*. Seeing all these miracles of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, the Seth was struck with

great awe. He was very happy and told Madhavji that he would deposit some money in a local bank to meet some of the requirements of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. Madhavji told him to talk directly to Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. So the Seth requested Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji to accept the money which he was offering him. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji refused and said that if he required money he could get one lakh of it by placing his hand in water and asking for it. He further said that God satisfies fully the needs of *sanyasis*. Ultimately Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji permitted the Seth to leave and told him to be happy.

This is how Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji rose above physical laws to develop the thinking of the Seth to a level where he understood that the individuality of a *yogi* is detached from his personality making his inner self unconcerned of what his outer self does.

On one occasion Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji sought to educate Sri Pran Nath Koul on devotion, bliss of the self and God's accessible nature. Bhagavaan Gopinathji said that it is possible to realize God in present age by adopting the easy method of chanting the Divine Name and that it is not necessary to renounce worldly life to achieve this end. So, one should do whatever possible to progress spiritually without postponing it.

Thus, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's second message was: The worldly joys that man experiences are due to the association of the senses and the mind with objects and hence they are dependent on them. So it is the self (*atman*) only which is capable of giving lasting joy. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's third message was: The Supreme Being who is described in the scriptures as the abode of infinite auspicious qualities, designed to display His nature for the edification of mankind during His incarnations. It was during his manifestation as Krishna that the quality of His easy accessibility came to the fore.

Modern psychology says that between the two eyebrows is the gland that is most mysterious part of the body. In the

terminology of spirituality it is the *Shivanetra*, the eye of Shiva as per the *Tantra*. This gland is called the pineal gland and is the third eye to the Tibetans. Between the two eyes, therefore, exists the third eye, but it is non-functioning. The *yogis* after attaining a stature par excellence open it. They close their eyes and focus both eyes on space in the middle of their eyebrows. They give total attention to it. This gland absorbs attention like anything. This way both their eyes become hypnotised with the third eye.

They become fixed. They cannot move. The third eye forces attention. In ancient Tantra scriptures, attention is considered food for the third eye, so in this process *yogis* see thoughts running before them. It is just like a film screen that thoughts are running and they are witnessing it. Same was true of Bhagavaan Gopinathji. His method of worship was itself a message that God as static energy is cosmos *(Brahman)* and as dynamic energy nature *(Prakriti)*. The union of two is that of *purush* (pure consciousness) and *prakriti* (nature) and the cause of all creation. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's message to his visitors was that we come to the world at a time which is suitable not to us but to cosmic conditions; in other words, we are born when the planets occupy certain positions in the heaven.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was a thinker (*vicharvaan*), whose life style and the psyche of worshipping the absolute cosmic reality revealed his thoughts, unfolding the secrets of divine power. The purpose of shifting his place to Dalhasanyar to the house of Sri Neelakanth Koul Saraf in 1937 could definitely be a move to remain in constant touch with Shiva and Shakti. From the window of the house both the Hari Parvat and the Shankaracharya hill were in full view. This perhaps enabled him to remain in constant touch with Shiva and Shakti both, the Absolute and his Energy aspect. From 1937 onwards for at least thirty years, he remained absorbed within his self yet helped people in fulfilling their worldly needs and engaged in showering grace and radiating light and illuminating their path. He at times made his devotees feel as Shiva. Shiva-Purana describes Shiva as the source of power because he contains

the energy of the whole cosmos and yet remains unmoving and stable with no trace of negative energy. Shiva is static potential energy and Shakti is dynamic, creative energy. The cosmic dance of Shiva and Shakti creates, sustains and dissolves the universe. Bhagavaan Gopinathji being an enlightened saint had himself experienced this entire divinity which has a formless state.

Carl Sagan, an American Astro Physicist, is of the opinion that creation of the universe at the beginning of each cosmic cycle is the cosmic dance of Shiva, as Nataraja the dance king. In the upper right hand is a drum whose sound is the sound of creation. In the upper left hand is tongue of flame a reminder that the universe now newly created billions of years from now, will be utterly destroyed.

These profound and lovely images are like a kind of premonition of modern astronomical ideas.

Bhagavaan Gopinathji continued the practice of blowing into fire with utmost concentration. At times burning charcoal from the fire would fall off on to his dress, burn it at places but he would remain undisturbed. This shows that he was concentrating on the element of fire which is at the centre stage in the Vedas also. He used his intellect to fathom the depth and vastness of Divine, sift real from unreal and eternal from transient and finally he dwelled in the realm of the eternal bliss to his last breath.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's three prophetic words *sezar, pazar* and *shozar* can be translated as the three qualities of simplicity, truthfulness and purity - the most desireable qualities of an ideal person. The three qualities collectively give us the Brahman-state and when one attains this state there is no bewilderment and it leads to the merger with the Divine.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's remark that *Amar chha maran* means that we are all immortal and should not fear death: "Immortal cannot die."

Similarly, his statement that *ahankaras namaskar, sui gav omkar, tami bani sakshatkar* has a meaning that one should realize

self and get absorbed in 'I-ness' for the self itself is *Omkara* (the Universal Self). By contemplating on *Omkara*, we will be able to realize the Divine reality.

As is clear, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's remarks have been gathered by his devotees while serving him. In one of his remarks about the realization he says that the path to achieve it is no doubt tough but once it is achieved the walking is smooth.

He put *vichara* or introspection much above other forms of spiritual practices. He wanted us to attain knowledge through intellectual practice and not to worship the superficial instead of the essence. Thus, not opposing the worship of Divine with form, he stressed on the worship of formless Divine. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji wanted people to devote themselves to the service of the needy. He wanted the householder to earn his living honestly and spend some of it on charity. He stressed on handling public money with the same caution as if one is handling a snake.

He was of the opinion that a seeker cannot perceive the reality so long as his attention is elsewhere. A seeker must have confidence in himself, faith in his preceptor, belief in his motive and trust in his efforts. A seeker has to put in hard labour and deserve the grace of his Guru.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was of the opinion that a seeker must put chain on his mind so that it does not waver and undisturbed concentration on the object is ensured. He would say that persons of indiscipline get cursed before they get corrected. So if one wants to save oneself from confusion and chaos, one should follow the path of discipline with high moral virtues, leading to harmony, peace, prosperity and progress.

Steven Gurth, an Australian disciple of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji who was introduced to him by Philip Simpfendorfer, said that he and Philip Simpfendorfer discussed the sainthood of Bhagavaan Gopinathji and both of them came to the tentative conclusion that Bhagavaan Gopinathji was a link between the larger planetary *Devas* (gods) and human beings. In earlier part of his life Gopinathji

visited sacred sites to live with and to communicate with *Devas*, the spirits, the Gods of each location. Steven Gurth further says that Gopinathji helped the *Devas* and *Devis*, the gods and goddesses of Kashmir and the rest of the country, dreaming to achieve their aims. Gurth says that through Philip, Yanne and other Australian visitors to Kashmir, Gopinathji's influence spreads to Australia. Thus, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji helped to re-establish the relationship between *Devas* and humans, that was such an important part of the Australian landscape before the Europeans invaded Australia. The way Gurth interpreted Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's links with *Devas* and *Devis* leads us to believe that Bhagvaanji as a *vicharak* had in mind the salvation of earth as the earth is threatened from physical and psychic pollution. The human body is animated by spirit (the divine element) so the earth is quickened by the *Devas* and *Devis* and if these powers should leave the earth; it would die in a tornado. Prof. J N Sharma has summed up the thoughts of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji in the words: All that exists is God incarnate and *OM* is the root. Meditation on *OM* removes the ego. Realization of God can come by discretion, hard work, the Guru's guidance and surrender to him. One should act upon what the four Vedas and Shastras (Hindu religious literature) lay down. *Maya* can be overcome by non-attachment. Lust should be avoided to attain spiritual bliss. One should think of Brahman as a tree and sit on any one of its branches. Goal is the same.

Thus, the thoughtful with the help of his pure thoughts is able to attain the Supreme Truth.

**Bal Krishan 'Sanyasi'**

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## CHAPTER VII

# TWO WHEELS OF SUCCESS – EFFORT AND GRACE

Before we deal with the subject of two wheels of success, it would be appropriate to understand what success really means.

### SUCCESS

In common parlance success means completion of a task which we undertake with the results favourably inclined toward us. For a student success means when he passes in his examination, for a sports person success means good performance, for a writer success means when his work is appreciated by one and all, etc. All these meanings of success are onetime meanings related to the worldly plane. These are not everlasting or permanent. Swami Vivekanand says that a successful person is that who performs all activities as God's service for the benefit of mankind. Real successful persons are those who serve fellow beings. Such persons are successful at all times and at all places. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar says that key to success is awareness, sense of belonging and commitment. Awareness means being conscious, interested in knowing, informed and not ignorant. Sense of belonging means I belong to you and not that you belong to me. When you say you belong to me, there is a sense of possession. Such is a source of bondage. When you say I belong to you it means that I am available to you for any service. Commitment means giving one hundred percent in all undertakings with which you are associated.

True successful person is one who has a constant urge to evolve oneself to a genuine cause. True successful person considers himself as a part of world upliftment and development process. The urge to contribute towards the world upliftment is never ending, constant, continuous and is never finishing. A true successful person considers his duty to uplift others, help others to understand themselves.

To him success is a long term affair as his effort is not confined to short term gains. A true successful person is free from all limitations, he expands all around himself, he is useful to all and he lives in present. He dedicates all his activities including the sense of doership and results of his work to God.

Success is an inner state. It is a feeling of inner worth which is higher than worldly success. Real successful person is a man of values. If you are successful in worldly affairs but you yourself are not morally upright, then you are not successful in the real sense. Real success lies in sincerity, honesty, transparency and most importantly in our attitude towards life. Attitude is an inner working of mind, a vital factor for achieving success. Real success lies in reforming our thoughts: thinking positively and looking for responsibility. Success is not an achievement but is more grounded in self effort. Secret of success lies within us and not outside us. Scientist Einstein says, "Try to become a man of values and not a man of outward success."

Real successful person knows that no one harms him except he himself. A real successful person is not affected by outer circumstances. He remains established in himself. Without ethical foundation, none can achieve success inwardly which is the main component of personality development.

We shall now revert back to the theme of the chapter and discuss self effort and divine grace.

**EFFORT**

Self effort is most essential component of human life. No task that we undertake could ever be completed if we are slack or lack in self effort. The Gita gives another name for human effort which is to fight. Lord Krishna repeatedly extorts Arjuna to stand up and fight the battle thereby meaning that Arjuna must put in cent percent effort to fight the enemy in the battle field. It is not only fighting the enemy in the battle field alone but fight also means fighting the battle of life with full zeal both outwardly and

inwardly against our evil tendencies. In the Bhagavadgita, self effort is regarded as the first lesson of man's spiritual life. Self effort is the theme of the Bhagavadgita. If we are unfit to fight the battle of life, we are unfit for God as well.

Human effort is based on free will which a human being possesses. Man is bestowed with free will but he has also to confront the part played by his fate. Interconnectedness between free will and fate is explained in the Bhagavadgita. The Bhagavadgita states that there are five causes for accomplishment of any type of work which a human being undertakes. Out of these four causes which are seat of action, the agent, various senses and manifold efforts are under human control. But the fifth cause which is called unforeseen force of past *karma* or fate is outside human control. The part played by fate or destiny is evident when despite our best efforts sometimes we do not obtain desired results for our actions. Free will and fate are referred to as two wheels of a cart where both play a part in its movement. However, fate should not dishearten us since with our sustained self effort we can neutralize the negative effect of our fate. In Mahabharata, Bhishma conveys the same idea when he says that exertion is greater than fate or destiny. Winning or losing is not important, what is important is that our self-effort is cent percent to the task we undertake without diverting our attention to the results which we are to achieve.

## DIVINE GRACE

What is divine grace? It is divine assistance given to a man for his regeneration and sanctification. Self effort and surrender to God are the means available to us for obtaining divine grace. A man whose hands and legs are tied with a rope cannot free himself with his own effort. Some outside assistance is necessary to untie the man. Thus, outside assistance in spiritual terminology is described as divine grace. Divine grace is the chief doctrine of the Bhagavadgita. Lord Krishna says in the Gita "Put your mind on me and you shall cross all obstacles by My grace."

When a man surrenders to God divine grace descends. But that does not mean that self effort is not required. Before you surrender to God, complete self effort is required on your part. We shall take an example to differentiate between self-effort and divine grace. A bird is sitting on the mast of a stationary ship in a dock yard. Sometime later the ship begins to sail. When the ship has reached deep inside the waters, the bird discovers that he is also moving along with the ship. The bird now decides to reach the shore with his own effort. He flies North, then South, East and West but finds no signs of shore anywhere. After making sustained self effort, the bird decides to sit quietly on the mast of the moving ship. He has now surrendered to outer circumstances after making sustained effort to continue his mission on his own. Similarly, divine grace comes when you have surrendered to God after putting in self-effort. Just by saying you have surrendered to God divine grace will not come till your effort upto the point of surrender is there.

On the subject of divine grace, Sri Rama Krishna has the following to say, "The wind of God's grace is incessantly flowing. Lazy sailors on the sea do not take advantage of it. But the active and the strong always keep the sail of their mind unfurled to catch the favourable wind and thus reach their destination very soon." The moral lesson is that we do not become eligible for divine grace unless we put in personal effort to gain physical and mental strength, develop our talents, capacities and work efficiency. The grace-worthiness is obtained when one achieves manliness, reliance, hard work and struggles purposefully to reach the destination. To obtain divine grace we have to identify ourselves with God so that His light and power become ours with His grace. This can only be done with self effort. For obtaining God's grace one has to banish one's ego completely from one's heart. We cannot demand God's grace with our efforts. We can only be inspired to work for it. Divine grace operates in human life but it can only be recognized when we become spiritually matured. Divine grace is an experience which is beyond reasoning. If we are good and we do good to others, we are on the way to receive divine grace.

Bhagavaan Gopinathji emphasized on both self effort and divine grace for being successful in both spiritual and worldly life. He said that divine grace could only be obtained by self effort in the right direction. One can achieve the highest level of perfection with self-effort and divine grace. As far as spiritual life is concerned, Bhagavaan Gopinathji was of the view that only morally sound person could enter spiritual life. And to be morally sound requires a high degree of disciplined self effort which requires constant practice of moral virtues. The three desirable qualities spelled out by Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji for gaining perfection in spiritual life are: *sezar, pazar, shozar,* meaning straight forwardness, truth and purity respectively. Self effort takes the driver's seat specially to attain purity of mind.

Self effort has been the touchstone of his teachings. According to Bhagavaan Gopinathji, twin purpose of human life is self-perfection and service to humanity both of which rest on self-effort. We can only help those in distress when we rely on our effort. Even to guide others with own conduct, which is one of the main teachings of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, requires big self-effort on our part. Again, living the teachings of our scriptures, emphasized by Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji requires self effort of a very high order. Only when our self effort is sincere, and we have surrendered ourselves to God, will divine grace dawn on us.

**Lt. Col. R.K. Langar**

## CHAPTER VIII

# SPIRITUALITY IN ACTION IMBIBING THE VIRTUES

Spirituality lies in silence because silence paves way for meditation. Silence is wordless prayer. Silence transcends thought, concepts, images and reasoning. It is a state of consciousness in which there are no words or images. If at all there are images, they should emerge from inside and not from outside. Silence recharges body and mind. Just as we care for our bodies with good food and rest, so we must also care for our spiritual selves as that part of us is connected with God. Spiritual insight, modern or ancient, enables us to formulate a vision that takes us beyond the *status quo* and acts as catalyst for the evolution of body and soul. To visualize future that is free from pain and suffering could be a vision statement at the middle level for an individual blessed with worldly intelligence. However, to visualize a future that leads to evolution of an individual to a state that is free from even the desire to be happy is the indication of a blessed soul. To aspire for a state of mind, that reacts the same way to both joy and sorrow, is the mission statement of the higher order.

Spiritualists of all times have been conscious of the importance of the eyes of the sort envisaged by the modern researchers. They have been advising us to see within and know ourselves. Sacred vibrations by their very nature have the power to put our spirit at rest. To fix our eyes on an object, preferably a sacred object and to gaze at it constantly, is called an icon prayer. What is basic is the act of gazing. Gazing by its very nature has the power of placing our spirit at rest to achieve intrinsic silence. Religions preach silence to achieve higher order in life.

Even when we are atheists and consider religion to be a fairy tale, we will find our lives meaningful and happy if we work for our fellow humans. When we go deep as to how our minds and bodies function, we will be put to surprise as to how such a

magnificent system was created. We will thus come to believe that a creator does exist.

In Hinduism the goal of life is self-realization. There are four ways of attaining it: *bhakti yoga* (linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service), *karma yoga* (the path of God realization through dedicating the fruits of one's work to God), *jnana yoga* (the path of spiritual realization through speculative philosophical search for Truth) and *raja yoga* (the path of concentration and meditation). One can combine two or three methods. The path chosen depends on ones temperament.

Shivananda Swami a great saint and a medical practitioner, has said that mind is that what keeps man away from God.

Sigmund Freud, a Western psychologist, has said that all humans have natural drivers and urges repressed in the "unconscious". Further, all humans have criminal tendencies. Through the process of socialization these tendencies are curbed by the development of inner control that is learned.

A human being like other living beings is functional and activates himself immediately after his birth. The process of activating oneself amidst the circumstances which surround a person is related with his response to the outside objects. This implies that subjectivity and objectivity are the two main pivots which serve as generators to keep a system in motion. This system can be called a life system. Subjectivity and objectivity are two related terms and in absence of one the other becomes irrelevant. Subjectivity is the activity of inner self whereas the objectivity is an outside activity affecting inner self. The activities of inner self are the activities of mind, body and soul. Brain is the entity within the body which has relevance in so far as the functioning of the nervous system of the body is concerned.

Mind is vibrant to achieve self-realization but stands withered away due to the accumulation of desires which enhance the darkness within.

Cognition is a term used to determine the inquisitiveness of the upper conscious mind to calm down the uproars of the emotional outbursts emanating out of the conflicting ideas inherent within. The process of cognition is effective only if it succeeds in its mission. Its mission is to draw a line of demarcation between the positive and the negative roles played by the inner core of the mind (*chita*). Cognition is in fact the initiative of the super conscious mind to sort out from the prevailing conflicting ideas of mind, whatever is relevant for conscious mind to act upon. The ideas reaching the conscious mind take the shape of desires.

Desires are associated with likes and dislikes, love and hatred. By super conscious mind we mean the three quotients, namely the intelligence quotient, the spiritual quotient and the emotional quotient. The strength of super conscious mind lies in the complete harmonious blend of all the three quotients, otherwise the purpose of loving and caring would be lost. It is the harmonious blend of the three quotients which moves the *sadhaka* to the stage of super consciousness.

Layers of mind namely, conscious, subconscious and unconscious, are filled with the ideas which are in contradiction with one another. The ideas so formed come to the mind from surroundings through sense organs. After the process of cognition is over, the super conscious mind strives to unite the three layers of mind so that the scattered ideas form a 'common place' and can allow conscious mind to be guided by the super conscious mind to achieve self-realization through meditation. Thus, the purpose of the unity among three layers of mind is to build a powerful and resourceful mind so that its inner core (*chita)* plays a positive role in submitting to the soul, a positive desire of attaining self-realization for its transmission to the brain and to the body respectively.

Usually the sense organs perceive the objects and the waves start coming to the mind. Even without perceiving from the outside world one draws certain images from his own imaginations, of course based on the subdued ideas hidden in his memories and his

*samskars* (mental impressions, subconscious tendencies) from his previous birth. Anyway, the jumbling of the ideas gives rise to certain concrete as well as vague conclusions to act upon them through conscious mind. The conclusion so formed has certain detrimental consequences in so far as rational living is concerned. This is because of the diversity of three layers of the mind which is possessed with the contradictory ideas. It is now obvious that the process of cognition achieves its goal only if the super conscious mind is in a position to distinguish between the negative conclusions and the positive ones occurring on the surface of the conscious mind. Otherwise the prevailing "pell-mell" can only leave conscious mind with the alternative of passing negative conclusions to the soul. The soul in turn will pass on the same information to the brain so that the brain activates the body to perform a selfish action (*sakama karma*), it rarely happens that positive ideas come to the soul, brain and body to perform selfless action (*nishkama karma).*

Hippocrates, the father of medicine, revolutionised medical science when he moved the seat of reason from the heart to the head and wrote, "from the brain, and from the brain only, arise our pleasures, joys, laughter and jests, as well as sorrows, pains, grieves and tear". Similarly, Dr. Wilder Penfield, one of the world's leading brain surgeons of his time, located a recording mechanism in an area of the brain whose function in mental activity had been unknown until then. He said that nature has managed to pack the recalling mechanisms of memory into two layers of gray matter only two and a half millimeter thick with a total surface of about 12 x 5 cms area. These layers are known as the temporally cortex. When we try to remember past experiences, electrical nerve impulses pass through these areas, causing the events to flash into our minds once again. Taken this as a proof, we can straightway conclude that all of us carry along with us certain traces of the previous births in our present births and these traces are our *samskars* which are the stored memories of our brain. Rarely it so happens that some of us recollect some of the events of the past life that too for a short period. Here the clue is taken from our memories.

It is with the grace of God and with the will of God that the *sadhakas* do get themselves connected with the reflections of the past karmas *(samskars)* and thus follow the path of spiritualism. This is called intuition (*aabhasa)*. This intuition guides them in starting the spiritual journey to reach its destination or even leads them to carry forward their spiritual journey which they have started in their previous births. Thus, they start meditating or practising *yoga* (*abhyasa*). During their meditation they gain lot of experiences. When they reach their spiritual heights, they go through fantastic experiences (*anubhuva*). These experiences create real happiness in their minds.

As already stated, the three quotients, namely the spiritual quotient, the intelligence quotient and the emotional quotient combined together form the super conscious mind or the *buddhi.* These three quotients are present in every human system. The spiritual quotient induces in an individual a sense of purity of thoughts and compassion for others. The intelligence quotient works as an instrument to draw a line of demarcation between the thoughts which are liked and the thoughts which are disliked. The emotional quotient serves as a drum beater to favour the likings and to disfavour disliking. Thus, if mind is the head clerk of the mental factory, *buddhi* is the manager of the firm. It is now quite evident that mind has got two functions. It has connections with *buddhi*, the manager, and with *karma indriyas* (organs of action), the workers.

People generally suffer when they are unable to satisfy their limitless needs and wants. Anyway these are desires which create sufferings. Craving is the deep seated desire that all living beings have for the pleasures of the senses and for life itself. One would like to enjoy these pleasures again and again and for so long as possible. Ignorance is the inability to see the truth and the truth is to attain permanent mental peace. In short, there are two kinds of happiness. One comes from physical comfort and the other through mental training. Obviously, between the two, mental comfort is superior and more influential because if our mental

state is calm and happy, small physical discomforts can be subdued. On the other hand, if our mind is restless we will not be happy even with the best facilities available. It is thus the meditation which trains the mind to stay calm and enjoy a happy life.

The ideas actually become desires before they reach the soul. Accumulation of the desires in mind makes mind anxious. Dr. Seema Hingorany, an Indian Psychologist, says, "An anxious mind tends to think of the worst possible scenario in any situation it perceives to be crisis situation, and that crisis situation can be anything from work and professional disturbance to personal day to day happenings. People with anxious mind react and over-react to even small problems in a big way."

Thus, it is from here that super conscious needs to act. It has to make an effort not to bring forward negative thoughts. It is to rationalize a man to make him to give probable reasons to his own self as to why the situation is leading him to destruction. It has, therefore, to lead him to the path of meditation.

Lal Ded, a great spiritualist and a poetess of Kashmir of 14$^{th}$ century, envisaged that human mind has the power to desire, power to know and power to act. Here it is now clear that the mind first desires and after applying certain amount of knowledge it finally acts to pass on the "set desire" to the soul for getting it fulfilled through brain and body. Lal Ded is very much particular in her verses that human being should desist from being preyed by the superficial desires (emotions) and advises a man to come ultimately out of the above said three fold activities of the mind so that neither the *nishkama karma* (work with selfless motive) nor the *sakama karma* (work with selfish motive) is performed and the soul becomes enlightened. While stressing to be in the company of the sages and seers, she again warns a man to restrict such type of company to a particular period, till the goal of spiritualising of mind is achieved. This again shows that the company of saints is required simply for awakening the super conscious mind for activating it to achieve positive results.

Human beings occupy the highest rank in the entire creation because God has endowed us with the divine powers which other beings lack. Infinite powers are contained in the inner core of the mind of a finite body. The great saints always remain confined to their activities of realizing their inner selves and become exalted souls seeking the path of salvation like Guru Nanak, Swami Ramtirth, Kabir Das, Mahavir Ji, Mahatma Buddha and Bhagavaan Gopinathji, etc. After relentless efforts they reached the conclusion that there is no difference between God and human beings. They could do so because it was the divine will which they were following. It is only the divine will which makes a saint to follow the path of introspection. Introspection is in fact the first stage in the process of attaining detachment. Introspection is strength of power of cognition which in reality encourages super conscious mind to distinguish between the good and the evil so that a man becomes reasonable enough to choose the path of meditation. Thus, one who is ordained by the divine will to work for the humanity has the capability and the aptitude to know and find out the real "I" in him and this aptitude he develops right from his birth. In such a given situation a child from his birth becomes inquisitive to know more and more about his real self and it helps him to remove all the dirt from the core of his mind in course of time.

Taming of the mind is the foremost task of the super conscious part of the mind. It is because of the fact that mind conceives the ideas after perceiving the surroundings through sense organs. Mind is in fact a charioteer controlling the reins of the body. This charioteer needs to be purified to lead the human soul towards perfection. The divine will alone strengthens the conviction of the super conscious mind to know well, to demarcate the paths with reason and to enable the conscious mind to lead the soul, brain and the body towards the path of righteousness. The *sadhakas* are, therefore, sent by the Almighty to lead people from darkness to light. It is not proper to say that the *sadhakas* shun the desire completely because the desire to have a life of peace and tranquility cannot be done away with. So the seers and saints prefer to desire only that much which allows them to attain real happiness.

So many seers and saints of repute have taken birth from time immemorial in the heavenly land of Kashmir, but Sri Gopinathji is the only one revered saint who earned the towering epithet of "Bhagavaan." A divine spark had kindled his mind right from his birth, which instilled in him an urge to lead people towards spirituality.

*Yoga*, which includes *bhakti*, is the system through which meditation is carried out by the *sadhakas*. Bhagavaan Gopinathji was a silent meditator and is believed to have followed the path of *bhakti* and *raja yoga*. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji throughout his life got engrossed in *dhyana* and *japa*. These can be rightly called *raja yoga* and *bhakti yoga*. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's all time silence with his unique facial expression could speak of his spiritual overtones. Though he seemed to be in waking state at all times yet he had a complete merger with the divine light. While following the path of *bhakti*, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji treaded the path of communion of individual consciousness with the universal consciousness and got complete merger resulting in the liberation from the bondage of the human soul. This made him identical with God but nowhere had it hindered him from being in touch with the mortal world. His whispers and silent utterances in his waking state with his devotees who were on his right and on his left could be the spiritual messages to be recollected and rediscovered by his devotees from time to time.

His permanent 'sit-in' and even his momentary standing postures in between as part of his lifestyle conveyed an impression that the diversified mind had become a united whole; and the will of the Almighty had finally prevailed upon the super conscious mind to purify the inner core (*chita*) of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's mind to direct his mind, body and soul to attain salvation. In fact, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji spent nine years of his early childhood in his own house and thereafter he remained in the houses of Pt. Shivji Khyberi, Pt. Keshavjoo Nagri and Pt. Kailash Joo Bhan for six years during which he lost his mother. He had his schooling for

a short period. He spent prime of his youth in the houses of maternal grandfather and Sri Keshav Joo Dhar and Sri Dina Nath Bota respectively. During his movement from place to place in his sixteen years of youthful age he struggled to determine the path which he thought could take him to his goal. There are five hymns relating to Ganesha, Guru, Divine Mother, Shiva and Narayana written by him in his own hand. There are two large size *Omkars* in Sharda script drawn by him around which is written Ram Ram and Shiva Shiva. He has also written in his own hand a prayper to the Guru and Tantric Mantra in Sharda script. This indicates that initially he was worshipping the deities. However, he did not continue for long on the path of *bhakti* alone. His path was the path of intense penance, thus making it easy for him to have command on the eight elements of earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, wisdom and the ego.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji preached three essentials to be followed by every human being in order to live a life of peace and happiness. These three essentials are: *sezar* (simplicity), *pazar* (truthfulness) and *shozar* (purity). This was his evangelical message to his devotees which needs to be communicated to mankind without any further delay. These three essentials can be called the *mahamantra* of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. Strict adherence to such *mahamantra* by mankind can bring it contentment and once this contentment is obtained mankind can free itself from the five enemies, namely: lust, anger, attachment, ego and greed. This is what Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji wanted people to follow.

There is no doubt that *yogic* exercise has psychic and scientific orientation and Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji had realized the importance of 'spiritual quotient' which is associated with the sense of 'purity of thought'. He had developed compassion for others by way of kindling light into dark hearts. He had single mindedness in setting positive bounds to himself and had achieved detachment. He was also maintaining equanimity or evenness of vision and had attained a harmonious blend of all the three quotients. Bhagavaan Gopinath

Ji's dips in the sea of spirituality would often bring smile and anger on his face with his mental trance and physical ecstasy remaining intact. The usual smile and anger on his face depicted his happy moments as a result of the union of his soul with the super soul and also his mental agony on seeing the diversified humanity disintegrated and in disarray. The message of Shaivites that God is all pervading and can be found in all living and non-living beings is in fact the theme of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's spiritual pursuit. His graciousness was clairvoyant and omnipresent in normal or even in abnormal circumstances to provide helping hand to mankind.

Bhagavaan Ji's personality was charming and charismatic. With a white turban on his head, wearing a *pheran* (a long robe) on his body, smoking with a *chillum* in his hands and gazing towards sky. he would talk to the invisible forces. However, his connection with the visible world remained intact, so did his concern about the darkness which envelopes the entire mankind. According to him, it was necessary for wise people to dwell deep into their inner self and find, segregate and eliminate the darkness within them, but he was worried with a question in his mind, "Where are the wise people?" It is said that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji had not entered into any discussion or conversation with his disciples during his lifetime but what I feel is that whatever little his disciples gathered from his body languages, from his whispers and the experiences which they gained during their association with him could be put together and treated as Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's gospel.

Upto 1925 Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji used to wear costly *pashmina pheran* and sophisticated shoes. When he lost his father, a turning point came in his life and he became indifferent to what he wore. He did not attach any importance to his external self. Every morning he washed his face and *yajnopavita* (the sacred thread) with water at a water tap. Then he would sit on his *asana*. Here he would tie his turban and put on *tilak* (a mark on the forehead) of saffron with a little ash in the centre. Thereafter he

would light his *dhooni* which was kept on a stone slab or in a large iron tray with firewood. Some oblations were offered in the *dhooni* and then he would fill his *chillum* and engage in smoking. It is recorded that during last ten years of his life he filled the big iron tray of his *dhooni* with tobacco. Then he sprinkled a layer of turmeric powder above it. Over it he spread a layer of sugar and rice flour, maize and wheat. Then he would set this on fire which would continue for a couple of days till everything burnt. Nobody was allowed to touch this, not even to poke the fire. His disciple Sri S.N. Fotedar dared to ask him the secret of this act. To him Babji replied that it was done to save the life of some one. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji had reached the stage of examination at a quite young age when young men of ordinary prudence get astray. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji at the age of 22 years had started circumambulation of Hari Parbat and meditation at Devi Aangan. Thus, with smoking *chillum* there, he was getting absorbed in his *ishta.*

In the year 1930 Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji shifted to the house of Pt. Tikalal at Rangateng where he lived for a period of six years. It was here that he started his *yoga sadhana* and a rigorous penance. For all these years he remained lying on the bed facing towards wall while a lamp remained lighted round the clock. He would never allow the room to be cleaned. He would take handfuls of *datura* seeds, opium, *panak* and other intoxicants during this period and remained deeply in concentration with his spiritual exercise. He remained unmindful of his physical existence. He did not allow any hindrance to his inner experimentations. This state of affairs lasted for seven years and he came out as an emancipated seeker with a vibrant soul.

As said above, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was aware of the gap between man's knowledge of what he is and how he treats others. He would imagine that the gap was vast; as it is a stark fact. The influence of materialism increases peoples' interdependence. To reduce the friction that results from such close encounters with each other, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji opined to internalize the concept that all the human beings being trapped in the mental conflict are

negative in thought. For that he would think of a fusion to emancipate the mind by acting on the *mahamantra* of truthfulness, rectitude and purity. These three essentials can act like a big bang like event which taught us as to how all humanity emerged out of the so-called BIG BALL OF FIRE and populated the earth.

It is through communication that we create concept of self, when we communicate and act together we create and recreate the soul and mind relationship. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was earnest seeker of truth who could never stop his onward journey between dualism and non-dualism. He went deeper and still further to find out the absolute truth which is beyond all changes. The absolute truth is the eternal consciousness which is beyond all manifestations. Rig-Veda says that before the beginning of the evolution there was neither entity nor non-entity. They are the two relative terms. If one exists, it presupposes the existence of the other. There is something which is neither this nor that, yet it is the cause of both. So there was neither birth nor death nor immortality. This shows that the absolute cannot be called mortal or immortal.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's continuous dip in the eternal consciousness would always keep him composed and he would keep on passing the relevant guidance to mankind pertinent to spiritual resurgence through his gestures and words.

Late Shankarnath Fotedar, one of his earliest disciples, opined that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's devotees had failed to fathom the profundity of his spirituality during his lifetime. He further said that the devotees even failed to realize that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was a world teacher. Sri S.N. Fotedar has asserted that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji being *jivanmukta* spared no effort to convince his devotees of the futility of rebirth and proclaimed that he will not opt of rebirth.

Shaivas in no way consider man inferior to God. They believe that man is the crown of creation. So Shaivites lay stress on dedicating oneself to a ceaseless effort to edify one's soul without

clashing with the amenities the temporal life offers. This concept essentially ensures a happy compromise between matter and the spirit. Here it can easily be said that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji without mentioning that he was a Shaivite adhered strictly to such a scientific concept of cosmo-psychic identity. His creed was his introspection and his religion was his love for humanity. Though he physically hemmed in his *kutiya* (modest house) without even coming out of the valley, he was spiritually a world Guru. He would scout with his surroundings to be in proper communion with God and also with mankind.

A 5th century Christian monk Dionysius the Areopagite has rightly said, "Then beyond all distinction between knower and known, the aspirant becomes merged in the nameless formless reality wholly absorbed in that, which is beyond all things and is nothing else – having stilled his intellect and mind he is united by his highest faculty with that which is beyond all knowing."

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji had by now gained vision of all times and had turned a perfect saint, for whom there was no distinction between the knower and the known.

He did not approve of the contention that those who love silence should go to Himalayas to settle over there. By silence he would mean an internal silence through which he would listen to the external pain and sufferings, strains and stresses and hatred and love.

Without characterizing Bhagavaan Gopinathji's practice of *yoga* one can draw a conclusion that he started from the stage of four petals right from the base of spine and while going through the process of *kundalini yoga* acted like a fish rather than a frog. That means that he thought that it was better to diversify and go cosmic than to stay in the safe well of fixed target which could be nothing but to seek paradise. He finally reached to the stage of thousand petals (which is called super conscious stage – *Brahmand*). Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's goal was not to reach the heaven but to

attain *moksha* in which he succeeded. He was a saint with a mission and his mission was to meet the invisible and also to offer guidance to the needy and to those engaged in the establishment of peace and love.

Bhagavaan Gopinathji moved to the house of Pt. Nilakanth Koul Saraf in Dalhasanyar in 1937 along with his brother and sister. According to Sri T.N. Dhar 'Kundan', the period of showering grace on others, radiating light and illuminating their path in case of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji began in 1937 and continued for a period of 20 years. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji had now reached a stage where he was free from even the desire to be happy and where his mind would react the same way to both joy and sorrow as a mission statement of the higher order.

The following quotes aptly emphasise the way of life that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji followed and encouraged others to follow during his presence in the mortal world. Due to his spiritual stature and his service to mankind he attained Godhood.

"It matters not how a man dies, but how he lives. The act of dying is not of importance, it lasts so short a time." - Samuel Jhonson 1971

"Life can be lived magnificently, if one knows how to love and work." - Leo Tolstoy

The word Bhagavaan in Sanskrit exactly means the sparkling trait in terms of educating the entire world. The word *bhaga* consists of six attributes. These are unmitigated sovereignty over temporal and subliminal prowess, religious merit, moral merit, undiminishing glory, graceful luster and perceptive knowledge and discernment. Bhagavaan is, therefore, one who knows the exact import of birth and death, creation and destruction and coming and going of mortals. Bhagavaan Gopinath thus earned Godhood by his own right, because he revelled in eternal bliss. There is a difference between *linga sarira* and *antarvaha sarira. Linga sarira* is astral body with seventeen *tattvas*, viz. five *karma indriyas* (organs of action,

viz. speech, hands, feet and two organs of evacuation), five *jnana indriyas* (organs of perception, viz. eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin or the sense of touch), *fivepranas*, mind and *buddhi* (discriminative faculty). *Antarvaha sarira* is very pure. It is full of *sattva*. It is free from *rajas* and *tamas*. It is with this body that *yogi* passes from one body to another and even after coming out from the physical body travels to higher worlds. We found this *antarvaha sarira* of Bhgavaanji hither and thither, wherever the presence of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was required at times. It can, therefore, be said that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji with *antarvaha sarira* has *sat sankalpa* and is thus omnipresent.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was equal towards Hindus and Muslims and also towards those who belonged to some other faiths. He would eat whatever was offered to him, be it meat or vegetarian diet. The only condition with him was that whatever was being offered to him, it should have been served with complete devotion and love. This attitude of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was in line with *Tantra* and *Shaiva* philosophy. *Shaivas* have the concern only for the soul which remains unaffected with whatever we eat.

Bhgavaanji's divine splendour always brought good fortune and prosperity in the material world and bestowed spiritual excellence in the divine world. He had the power to prevent all the misfortunes, pitfalls and tragedies that could occur in the lives of his disciples and devotees. He was protector and guardian of both the material and spiritual world. His very presence denotes perfection as his holy power energizes the body, strengthens the mind and purifies the soul. In him one could find the divine manifested in human form.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji had seen the truth. He was seeing things as they were in reality. In his mission of educating human mind, he taught his disciples to overcome craving and ignorance, and laid emphasis on knowing the inner kingdom of divine by developing the habit of introspection. He once told his disciples:

"Some went the way of flesh only,

Reading to them was no avail,

Some departed with donkey loads of books over them

An unrewarding exercise in futility.

Those who eschewed the occult message

And realized this

Were the recipients of divine compassion and forbearance."

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's words were the words of comfort for mankind and were effective as they were rooted in silence. The words which stem from the depth of the inner silence of the seers are soothing; they heal. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji experienced a communion, a oneness of being that binds all of us together for no other reason than that we are in each other and both of us are in God.

The fire pan glowing with live embers before Bhagvaanji was a sort of non-stop practice which was ordained for him just like other *yogis* to uncover the soul as gold gets out of the fire. In other words, this will mean to free himself from the fire of the belly, fire of the passion and fire of the pyre. So it is now clear that after having conquered all these fires, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was very keen to see that his devotees get themselves rid off the impurities with which the human souls are charged. He thus alluded:

"Throw your 'Self' in simmering cauldron

Of incessant mental discipline

And bake it fully as that of the super-self

With the fire of self-scrutiny from below

With the non-leaking lid above it

Make the 'self' foolproof from any norm whatsoever

This delicacy of the 'self' need be prepared with

The fragrant spicy salt of self-education."

From here Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's message is loud and clear. He actually communicates to his disciples in particular and to all the people in general that excellence is not the exclusive privilege of a chosen few. Every one is included – from the most gifted to the least endowed. There are no qualifying examinations, no grades to be sought. Human beings have two distinct entities: the mind and the intellect or super conscious mind. The mind is the realm of emotions, impulses, likes and dislikes. The intellect or the super conscious mind is the rational and discriminating faculty. The intellect discerns and distinguishes between pairs of opposite. Our actions can be driven by whims and fancies of the mind or by the clear counsel of the intellect. Impulses led actions are weak. They lead to failure. Actions propelled by intellect take one to success. Wherever there is conflict between the two, it is the intellect that ought to prevail, because it paves way for the mind to become meditative. The meditation helps a person to become the part of universal consciousness by obliterating the ego completely.

Prof. B.K. Kuthiala of the Kurukshetra University has rightly said, "A mission to create a situation where one's consciousness merges with the common universal consciousness is the mission, which the seers envisaged for the seeker."

No doubt a mention has already been made about the kind of *yoga* which Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji would have practised but what brought him emancipation and what made him to reach to the highest spiritual order is anybody's guess. His secret association with snakes also confirmed that he had direct contact with the Snake God, Shiva. At the end of his seven years *upasana* (worship, devout meditation), he chose to have one or two snakes around his waist under his loose gown known as *pheran*.

From all accounts known from the disciples of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji one can infer that *yoga* practised by Bhagavaan Gopinath

Ji could have been of the category of *anupaya* (the stage of no means) for he acted and yet acted not and all the time he was one with Lord Shiva. In *anupaya*, a seeker has only to observe. He acts but is detached. Here he gets directly connected with the eternal bliss of Shiva. Thus, the achievement one attains from this category of *yoga* is no less than the achievement one gets through the *Kundalini yoga.* About Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji it can be said that he was completely detached while all the time living within a household. This means that he was on the *nivritti marga* (the path of renunciation) but all the time he appeared to be simultaneously treading the *pravritti marga* (the path of action).

Anyway his concentration in his meditation was so intense and he grew so unaware of his body that a rat nibbled a hole in one of his heels. It caused his body to swell and sometimes made him vomit blood. During his seven year period of *sadhana*, he would take no food for long periods extending even to six months. Sometimes after breaking a long fast, however, he would take food in very large quantities. He came out of this terrible ordeal having attained the full realization of the supreme reality. In his later years Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji took to another type of spiritual practice. He would emit vibrations from his knees and intestines and through his *chillum* smoking. The vibrations seem to have been in tune with cosmic vibrations. According to Sri S.N. Fotedar, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji regarded emitting and receiving vibrations as a superior and direct method of self-realization though it involved much taxing effort and many tribulations. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji kept a *dhooni* burning before him and offered oblations into it off and on. He continued with this practice even while he stayed at some holy shrines in or outside Srinagar.

Having attained the highest spiritual state Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji would remain absorbed in the self most of the time and would also come to our level of consciousness to answer questions or give someone permission to leave. He talked little and that too in low whispers. There have been occasions when other

saints have directed devotees to Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji with reverence. One Sri A.N. Fotedar working in the forest department of the J&K state was once suspended from service on a flimsy ground. While being worried, he along with his wife came across Nand Bab, a contemporary saint. The said saint put a *tilak* on his forehead and gave him a chit of paper on which he wrote that he should put in an appeal before the emperor of saints, Gopinathji who is adorned with seven medals and lives at Chandpora. Sri Fotedar then went to Bhagavaan Gopinathji. There he was assured that he would be reinstated with some adverse remarks in his service book. He was also informed that his grievances would be redressed only after there was change of government. All these foreseen events came true and Sri Fotedar was reinstated.

Sri Shankar Nath Zadoo, a disciple of the Bab, was depressed when his wife passed away two years after Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji left his mortal frame. He almost lost his mental balance. His daughter took him to see Satya Sai Baba. Sai Baba told Sri Zadoo that his Guru Gopinath had directed him to help him. He gave him holy ash which Sri Zadoo consumed and felt an electric current passing through his body and became healthy. Sai Baba also remarked that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was the greatest Kashmiri saint who was *jivanmukta,* liberated in his life time.

Nand Bab, the aforesaid saint of repute, was very much impressed by Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's spiritual stature. He insisted the marriage ceremony of his own disciple, a young girl to be solemnised in the proximity of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's residence. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji withheld her father's death for a day to enable the function to go ahead without any hindrance.

No doubt it is true that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji started with spiritual discipline known as *panchang upasana* that is meditating on five deities: Ganesha, Surya, Narayana, Shiva and Shakti. However, his ideal was Divine Mother Sharika and he observed penance at the Sharika shrine (Hari Parbhat) for reaching upto subliminal heights in the years to come.

It is here that he showed the Divine Mother to a seeker in the form of a beautiful small girl. It is here that he offered her *nadarmunja*, a savoury preparation with his own hands. He would go to this famous shrine sometimes in the afternoon and spend the night in the house of one Sri Saligram, a priest at the temple. Once he stayed in the house of Sri Ramjoo, another priest for about nine months near the sacred hillock. He seems to have been so close to Goddess that she again appeared in the form of a small girl for him and for another person, Nila Koul to see at the spring of *pokhribal* inside the exit gate called Kathi Darwaza. These incidents are reported to have taken place during the period from 1937 to 1946.

The Rig-Veda says that the "Truth" is one but the wise call it variously. Having realized the truth, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji respected all paths of worship and thus did not consciously behave as a follower of any particular path. It would, therefore, be wrong to categorize him as a *Shaivite, a Shakta, a Vaishnava, a Vedantin* and so on as the characteristics of all these were found in him. He uttered "*Aum Namah Shivaya*" at the time of giving up the gross body and yet a copy of the Bhagavadgita (a Vedantic text), which he regarded as his Guru, was always by his side. Calling "Aum", the throat of the Godhood, he once said that nothing was possible without it in the spiritual field. It is known that he put two of his prominent disciples on the path of the *upasana* of Narayana with form. Ultimately he would shift his disciples from the *Upaasanaa* of God with form to that of a God without form.

Brahman is spoken of as *Sat, Chit, Anand* but includes what is not *Sat,* what is not *Chit* and what is not *Anand.* It is beyond speech and thought, yet the whole range of thought and speech lies within it.

The Bhagavadgita (Chapter 2.29) speaks of it as a 'wonder', for it is not anything that can be conceived of intellectually. Brahman is the value of life and the truth of it is that it is lived with ease.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was a Brahmin of the highest order because he knew the Brahman. The definition of a Brahmin is

exactly one who knows the Brahman. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji would have his head shaved once a month and then his devotees would massage his body without oil. These devotees have said that during this exercise a strange aroma and fragrance would be smelt from his body.

It has been reported that ailments cured by him included cancer, diabetes, tuberculosis, brain disorders and hemorrhages. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji would recognize fully the need of poor daughters and would shower spiritual bless on them.

Prof. Kashi Nath Dhar is of the opinion that towering souls like Bhagavaan Gopinathji subscribe to the well being of the entire mankind since spirit is universal and unfettered by man made barriers. He further says that in its broader subliminal perspective, *dhooni* and *chillum* were the potent symbols of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji to eschew, to consume, nay, to reduce to ashes the woe plaguing the entire humanity, weal thus became the only residue for ensuring the good of the people at large.

Once a disciple of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji posed a query to him whether liberated souls should help the people in attaining the temporal benefits and also the spiritual rewards? Does it not dry up the fount of spirituality? To this Shri Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji said, "A man or even an animal can cross over to the other side of the river by his muscular body but an ant like insect cannot accomplish this without proper succour." Thus, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji had full faith in doing good to mankind even at his own cost. This is exactly as the Bhagavadgita has ordained.

From Dalhasanyar Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji shifted to Rishi Mohalla in 1947 into the house of Pt. Madhavjoo Sathoo who was married to his niece, Chandaji. He stayed there for ten years and continued to guide the seekers and spread his radiance and helped the needy ones. The husband of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's another niece died in 1957. The younger daughter of his niece Kishniji approached him and he took his *chillum* in his hands and the

blanket over his shoulders and proceeded to her house at Chandpura. He lived there for eleven years till he attained *nirvana* in 1968.

When an *acharya* (preceptor) from outside the state wanted to know from a devotee in Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's room at what stage of spiritual evolution Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was, while the devotee wondered what to say, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji recited the sixth verse of the fifteen chapter of the Bhagavadgita which translated into English reads: "The Sun does not illumine it, nor the moon, nor the fire, that is supreme abode, reaching which one does not return (to this world of birth and rebirth)."

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji enabled a devotee to realize the concept of time relative to man and Lord Brahma. The devotee had some reservations about this. He enabled the devotee to live three life cycles in some earthly hours.

During Qabaili raid launched by Pakistan in Kashmir in 1948 he said that he was himself present at the front and there is no danger to Kashmir. Our soldiers saw him at the front directing them to fire in this or that direction though at that time he was seated in his room. In 1948, regarding the debates at U.N. about Kashmir Philip Simpfendorfer, an Australian devotee, writes, "It was thought that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji visited the Assembly because he was heard to speak Russian during that period and was able to give information regarding the progress of the debate." In China war in 1962 when he was seen at the war front, he had left his residence and returned the next day. His body was quite cold. He had caught chill and had bronchitis. In answer to a question by a devotee he said that he had gone to Tibet to settle the matters. In a few days there was a lasting ceasefire. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji repeated the same gesture in 1999 at the war front in Kargil when Indian soldiers were in need of help which he provided. This is something surprising because Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji had gone to his heavenly abode as early as in June 1968.

A clear understanding of man's relation to the absolute is a matter of momentous importance to the seekers of the truth.

Absolute or Absolute Brahman is devoid of all kinds of qualities which means the limiting adjuncts or *upadhis*. The Absolute is like a witness which does neither create nor preserve nor destroy but remains alone as one without the second. Our minds are like so many eddies or whirlpools in the eternal current of the cosmic mind that is running and flowing from eternity. Our individual wills are like the rays of the Sun and the divine will contains all these rays. That is all the wills of the individual emanate from that one source like the rays of the Sun which emante from that self effulgent luminous body. The Veda says: "Tat Tvam Asi" which means "That are Thou." Ishavasya Upanishad says, "*Ishavasyam Idam Sarvam yet Kinchit Jagatyam Jagat*", which means all this that is seen in this world, is pervaded by the Divine. Shaiva Acharyas of Kashmir are of the opinion that divine is manifested as universe but stays above it (*Vishwaatmikam tad uttirnam).*

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji saw everything as immortal. He was himself immortal. He made an important spiritual statement when he said, "*Ahankarsas Namaskar, Sui gav Omkar, Tami Saet bani Sakshatkar.*" What he meant was to realize self and get absorbed in I-ness for the self in itself is Omkara, the universal self and by contemplating on Omkara we are able to realize the divine and get the glimpse of the Brahman. Here Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji makes us to understand that the Personal God is the first step. After that we rise still higher and we get into deeper than the concept of an extra cosmic personal God who is sitting above.

Brahman does not need *antahkarna* (inner instrument) to sense, think and reason. Brahman does not need eyes to see. He is self luminous. He gives light to everything. He imparts light to *antahkarna*. He gives light and power to *indriyas* (organs). He is *chit swarupa*. He is *chidghana* (mass of consciousness). He is mass of knowledge. He knows everything through self knowledge. He sees within himself through self knowledge the whole universe as his own *sankalpa* as *virata*.

Brahman is not an object. It is to be felt by direct spiritual cognition. Knowledge of Brahman comes through spiritual *anubhava* (experience) and direct perception wherein the seer, sight and seen merge into the one existence like the bubble in the ocean. Soul is conscious *tattava* (principle) within the Brahman. It is the *Sat-Chit-Anand.* When the Brahman aspires for creation the soul and the nature combine (the *Purusha* and the *Prakrati*) together to create the universe. At the time of the creation of the universe there are 36 *tattvas* (fundamental principles) present in the *Prakrati. Manas* (mind), *buddhi* (discriminative faculty), *ahankar* (ego-sense) and *Chit* are from these *tattavas* and the combination of these four *tattavas* is called *antahkarna.* This *antahkarna* is also known as *jiva. Atma* (soul) is all pervasive and when a part of it is surrounded by *antahkarna,* it is called *jeeva atma. Jeev atma* like *atma* is not active in itself. To make it active *prana* (the vital force, the life current) gets connected with it. *Prana* is also all pervasive and is present in cosmic energy. Mind, *prana* and *virya* (semen) are under one connection. If any one of these is controlled, the other two are controlled by themselves. *Hatha Yogis* try to control the *prana. Raja yogis* try to control the mind. *Jnana yogis* start their *sadhana* with *buddhi* and meditator starts with the practice of *manolaya* (temporary stillness of thought) and ends with *manonasa* (annihilation of mind). *Manolaya* is a temporary absorption of the mind in the object of meditation. When we meditate on the form of Sri Krishna, the mind becomes absorbed in the form of Sri Krishna temporarily. *Manolaya* usually takes place during sleep. The mind gets involved into the cause. This can be part of *bhakti yoga. Manolaya* is not sufficient for attainment of *jnana.* In *manolaya* the mind is prone to revive. *Manolaya* cannot save us from bondage. *Manolaya* cannot give us *mukhti.* It is only the path of *manonasa* (annihilation of lower mind) that can give us liberation. In *manonasa* the mind revives not and is dead. *Manonasa* is brought about by *Brhman jnana.*

Having gone through all these yogic practices, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was aware of the shortcomings which an average devotee

can have while treading the path of meditation. He once said to one of his favourite disciples who was seriously studying some spiritual books, "*yi chhu kitab paraan tor chha gash*". His remark conveyed that mere bookish knowledge does not bring light to aspirant. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's another remark that, "*yi gav taf parun yi gav veeri shihlis tal pakun*" gives importance to introspection (*vichara*) much above other forms of spiritual practice.

A great saint poet of India Sri Anandmurti who composed precious gift of great potential named *Prabhat Sangeeta* called it neo humanism because he called his work as the song of human triumph. Through his writings he conveys that when underlying spirit in humanism is extended to everything animate and inanimate in this universe, one can effectively proclaim the song of human triumph. According to him, we need to look forward to the auspicious day when every one will be encouraged enough to travel on the path of spirituality, and when the victory song will be sung to celebrate the supremacy of all creation, including the animate as well as the inanimate. Sri Anandmurti has asserted that if a person with talent wants to raise his art to the peak of expression, he might need to infuse it with its spiritual consciousness. *Yi gatshi yatsun:* "It should be oedained by the Divine." This remark was made by Sri Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji when music was going on in his room and the singer sang a line which said that a seeker must join his mind and breath with his preceptor. The spontaneous remark made by Bhagavanji was that this must happen with the grace of God. The message is deep and profound.

The seeker must first of all combine the thought waves of his mind with those of his preceptor. This way he will come on the same wavelength as that of his Guru, but this process needs to have the sanction of the will of God or the will of his Guru. If God or the Guru sanctions such a process, the seeker receives intuition (*abhasa*) to tread the path of meditation.

As already hinted, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was fond of music. Mohammad Abdullah Tibet Baqal, Sri Jagan Nath Shivpuri and

other renowned Sufiana musicians used to sing for him and he would listen to them with rapt attention. The music programme included *bhajans* as well. Once in 1958 Sri Shivpuri's one year old son got ill. He went to the residence of Bhagavaan Gopinathji with a request in his eyes about the suffering child. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji put his legs on the window sill one after the other and then muttered to himself, "The child has to attend an urgent business elsewhere, it cannot linger on here." The following midnight the child passed away. After three years Shivpuri was suffering himself from duodenal ulcer. One day his wife wept before Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. Babji said, "The master had a few grains of *moong* bequeathed to him by his mother, which are now exhausted. So there is no danger hereafter." He was referring to the mother of Shivpuri who had died of duodenal ulcer.

On his way to Amarnath, Motilal, a boy accompanying the group, fell ill and had high fever. Sri Bholanathji, who was Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's close associate, wanted the boy and his mother to return home. Babji did not agree to this. He gave the boy some tea left over by him to drink. The fever was gone and the boy was fit to move from Chandanwari onwards.

At Chandanwari itself at midnight Bab suddenly got up and summoned Sri Bholanathh and some others to accompany him. They ran after some pilgrims who had gone ahead on a wrong path. Soon they caught up with them and brought them back. Similarly, at Wavjan the pilgrims had camped for the night. Suddenly the sky was overcast with menacing clouds and all apprehended terrible rains causing devastation. At the request of his sister Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji put up his *chillum* and then addressed the clouds with these words, *hupaer aeva yapaer neeriv:* "You came from that side, now you go away this side." In no time all the clouds drifted away and the entire sky became clear.

From different accounts it is clear that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji attached a lot of importance to the grace of a preceptor. What he meant was that a preceptor was needed to evaluate the need, the

capacity and the temperament of a seeker. At the same time he had also made it clear that the effort of the seeker is of paramount importance and that he is himself to strive for the truth, yet he feels that the preceptor helps him in selecting the method best suited to his genius. The preceptor rather guides the seeker in spiritual exercise and assists him in warding off the difficulties.

To say it with clarity Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji initiated those people into the realm of divinity who were mentally disposed towards the flight of the soul. He would not have blessed those grumbling souls whose wants never get satiated. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji undertook this triad of divine obligations with due care and thought. Prof. K.N. Dhar in his book titled *Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji of Kashmir* has made it clear that height of a soul can only be measured correctly by its capacity to carry as many smaller souls with it as it can. He further says that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji acquitted himself exceedingly and incomparably well in this double task, a voluntary assignment of course. Prof. K.N. Dhar is of the opinion that this is essentially tight rope walking but Sri Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji opted for this even at the risk of exhausting his own fund of subliminal virtues.

Nothing can be said with certainty as to who could really have been Bhagavaan Gopinathji's Guru. Several Kashmiri saints, including his father Narayan Joo Bhan, Swami Balakjoo Kaw, Swami Aftabjoo Wangnu and Swami Zanakak Tufchi had come into Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's contact. However, there is no evidence to show that he accepted anyone of them as his Guru. Prof. A.N. Dhar has considered Swami Zana Kak Tufchi as Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's Guru. His findings are based on the supremacy of Swamiji after making personal enquiries from the eldest niece of Swami Akalal. Prof. A.N. Dhar was told that Swami Akalal Ji and Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji had been disciples of Swami Zanakakji.

Sadhus would often come to meet Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji and he was giving *dakshina* (offering of money as gift to sage) to each one of them. Some were spiritually very advanced and some

looked upon him as *siddha*. Sri B.L. Kak, a veteran journalist, in his book *Lord Gopinath: Brevity His Beauty* points out that in Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's act of worship there was, of course, a clear message: God as static energy is cosmic (*Brahman*) and as dynamic energy is nature (*Prakriti*) – shining in the heavens as Sun; light of eternal truth and reflecting the beauty, the serenity and radiance of the Moon as cosmic love. Sri Kak further says that after worshipping Sun and Moon, Lord Gopinath was heard chanting, "Jai Shani Deva" while offering oblations into the *dhooni*.

Prof. K.N. Dhar is of the opinion that the vibrations received and consequently transmitted by Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji during his life span have been evergreen in the atmosphere, and even when he himself immersed in the ocean of self consciousness the resounding waves thereof have been still wafting their undying music to the seekers.

Sri H.N. Koul, who was a noted journalist, placed himself on record as saying that his wife had made Lord Gopinath the Honorary Physician in his absentia and in absentia of his son Ashish. Sri Koul prized two things in life – one pertaining to his son and the other pertaining to his own revival from his respiratory and liver ailments. Sri Koul wrote that his son Ashish suddenly doubled up in pain and his shrieks were piercing his heart. It was midnight. His wife scooped up a pinch of ash of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's *dhooni* and put it in the crying child's mouth. The child's stiffness vanished and he calmed down.

The soul has the creative power. We may say that our mind has also the creative power but mind cannot do anything without being in close touch with intelligence or source of intelligence, the soul or atman. We have that love in us which is the creative energy of the universe and when that is perfected, or becomes perfect love, that perfect love is the creator. So when these attributes are perfected in an individual, the individual becomes one with the Universal Soul. Bhaghavaan Ji had freed his creative spirit to find ways to put it to use. By stopping fighting his creative spirit that was struggling

to break free inside him, he got happiness of such a magnitude that he became the one, he was meant to be. He had controlled five elements of Maya. These elements are *vidya*, representing limited knowledge; *kalaa* - representing limitation of action; *raga* - representing imperfection; *kaala* - representing impermanence; and *niyati* - representing limitation of space. He had attained perfect freedom denoted by the five essential features of *chita* - representing complete knowledge; *nivriti* - representing unlimited action; *ichchha* - representing perfection; *jnana* - representing permanence; and *kriya* - representing universality. This perfect freedom had widened his vision and given him control over all elements.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji often recited veres 38 and 39 of the chapter 3 of the Bhagavadgita, depending on the situation when the visitors would come to his house. These verses emphasize: "As a flame is covered by smoke, a mirror by dust and the foetus by the womb, so is knowledge covered by the desire. Knowledge is covered by this insatiable fire of desire, the constant foe of the wise. O son of Kunti."

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji never adopted any outward garb of a saint. He did not grow beard and did not wear any other dress like that mendicant. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is venerated today as one of the most eminent saints of India.

**Bal Krishan 'Sanyasi'**

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*Lord Gopinath: Brevity His Beauty* by Sri B.L. Kak.

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# OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
# CITY OF JERSEY CITY
## NEW JERSEY

BRET SCHUNDLER  MAYOR

# Proclamation

WHEREAS, on July 26, 1997, the Indian-American community of Jersey City is celebrating the glorious 100th Anniversary of the birth of Jagadguru Bhagawaan Gopinathji, one of the most eminent saints who ever graced India and the world; and

WHEREAS, Kashmir has produced a galaxy of saints and sages from times immemorial. But few among the contemporaries have left as indelible an impression on the minds of the people as Bhagawaan Gopinathji. He never moved out of Kashmir, and covered himself with humble anonymity; and

WHEREAS, having attained the heights of spirituality, Bhagawaan Gopinathji's life was a curious blend of Jnana (Knowledge), Bhakti (devotion), and Karma (action); and

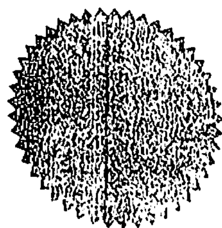
WHEREAS, Bhagawaan Gopinathji had exhibited an altruistic approach in teaching others to understand that suffering is inseparable from existence but that inward extinction of the self and of the senses culminates in a state of illumination beyond both suffering and existence.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT I, BRET SCHUNDLER, MAYOR of the City of Jersey City, do hereby proclaim July 26, 1997 as

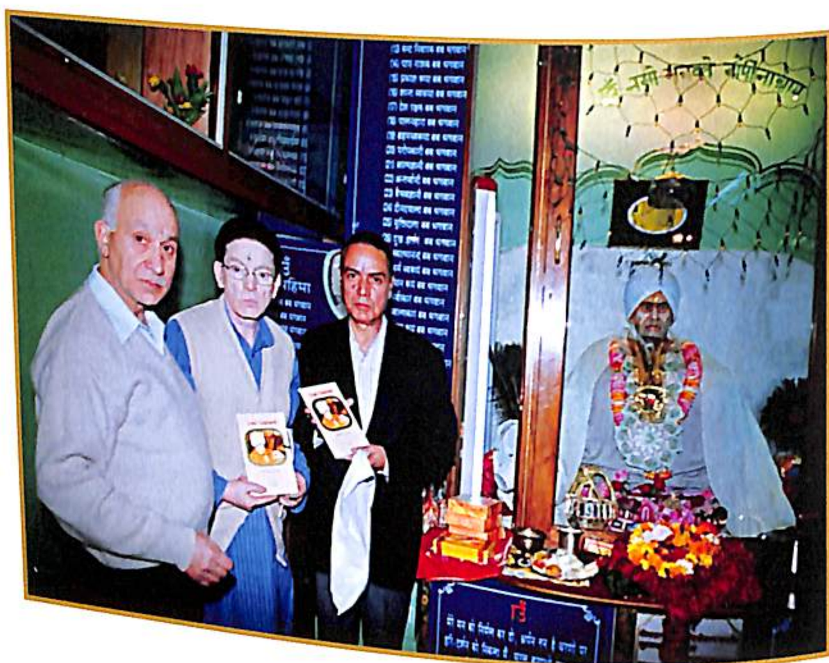
JAGADGURU BHAGAWAAN GOPINATHJI DAY

in Jersey City and urge all our residents to celebrate this day with respect and enthusiasm.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand and caused the Seal of the Office of the Mayor to be affixed this 26th day of July in the Year of Our Lord, Nineteen Hundred and Ninety-Seven



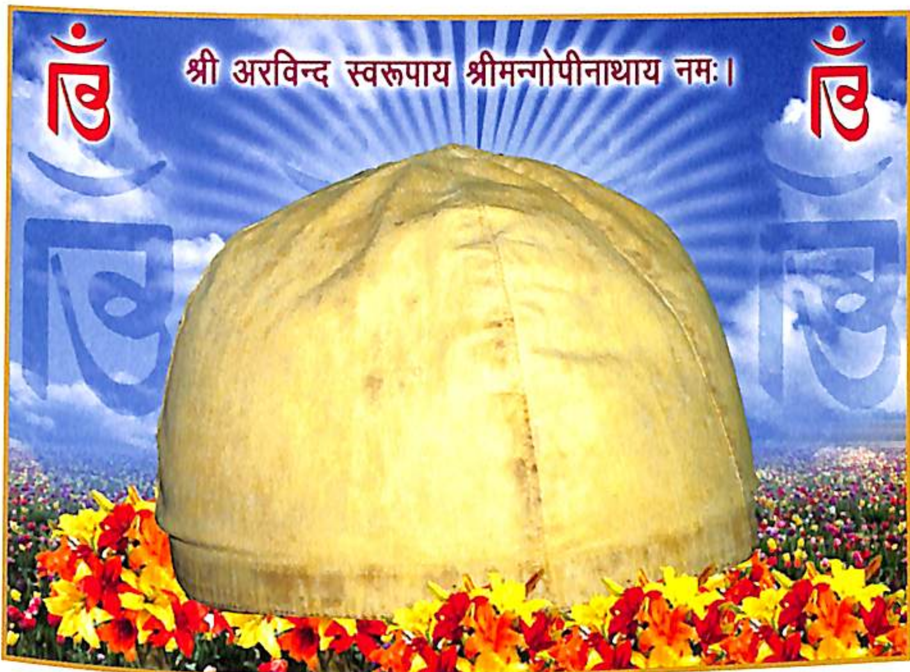
BRET SCHUNDLER
MAYOR



Felicitation Ceremony in honour of Sri B.L. Kak, a senior journalist, author of Lord Gopinath Ji "Brevity His Beauty". The book has unknown facts for the admirers of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji and the repository of the detail of historical significance for posterity.

The function was arranged by Jagat Guru Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji Foundation on 20 February 2005.

Sh. B.L. Kak brought Bhagavaan Gopinath's miraculous intervention in the Kargil War to national attention.




A relic of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji -
his cotton cap, white in colour.
It enable us to concentrate and
from there we take off, as it were,
to the supreme heights of spirituality.

CHAPTER - IX

# IMPORTANCE OF SCRIPTURES

## A - THE BHAGAVADGITA

The Bhagavadgita is regarded world wide, a great book on the art of living. Its study brings to humanity happiness, peace, freedom, fullness, inner purity and protection from fear. The Gita gives a religion by which the rule of karma can be transcended and the chain of cause and effect can be broken. It is acknowledged universally as an all inclusive document. The Gita does not recommend abandoning of life. It teaches reconstruction of life by righteous way of living. It discusses philosophy, metaphysics, psychology, social service and most importantly it emphasizes on selfless performance of one's duties in life. In the whole world there is no book as elevating and inspiring as the Gita. The Gita is not meant to be worshipped but its teachings are meant to be drunk for nourishment of the mind.

The Gita is mainly an action-oriented scripture. Message of the Gita is a clear cut mandate for action. It asks man to work in God consciousness and by doing so he will not be tainted by work - a state of *naiskarmya* or a state of *yoga*. The Gita says that the goal of life is to attain life giving wisdom which gives a man complete freedom. Even merits and demerits become obstacle for those who aspire for total freedom to act in life. The whole intent of the Gita is to choose good and then transcend it with free choice, to establish oneself on truth. It recommends *purushartha*, that is striving, self effort and determined effort. Gita asks you not to evade social responsibility. It says that social order must be influenced by moral order in order to bring smoothness and efficiency in running the society.

The Bhagavadgita wants us to stay in the world and contribute towards its well being. It asks you to live in the world without being affected by the worldly environment as a lotus lives in water without being wetted by the water. By following the teachings of

the Gita, a fundamental change is brought about in our approach to life. Those who act on what the Gita says do not require any external assistance or participating in any ritual for self elevation. The Gita wants you not to just do *yoga*, a trend commonly seen in today's society (I am doing *yoga*), but to become a *yogi* who feels the pleasures and pains of others as his own. It teaches a philosophy of energism and practicality covering human dignity and equality. It is a dynamic non-creedal, non-sectarian, impartial and a universal scripture which emphazises on self management. It is externally dynamic but internally calm and peaceful which keeps on in a state of never ending happiness. It asks man to struggle for self mastery. The Gita guides, encourages, protects, cautions, elevates but does not order. It does not reject any "I" seal but gives it a proper place. It asks man not to be a foot note. It asks man to be a cause and not that much of an effect. It eradicates self-serving and breaks a defensive mind set. Its thrust is to eliminate sorrow from one's life.

The Gita does not speak of this or that form of religion but speaks of impulse which is expressed in all forms of religions. It contains all the wisdom which is necessary for a worldly man to convert ignorance into enlightenment. The Gita attracts all those who have relish for action and adventure. The *mahamantra* of the Gita is: stand up, arise and fight. It is a doctrine of non-attachment and divine grace. The Gita says that the man is essentially divine as God resides in him and it is man's duty to manifest this divinity through *yoga*. In the Gita all the four types of *yogas* which are action, love or *bhakti*, knowledge and meditation are glorified as the best in order to make them appealing to the followers. All *yogas* are equally valid but the best is synthesis of all *yogas*. This is what the Gita preaches.

## BHAGAVAAN GOPINATH JI AND THE GITA

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, the great Shaivite saint of Kashmir, was deeply influenced by the Bhagavadgita and its philosophy in that he always kept a copy of this scripture with him. He often said that the Gita can serve as one's Guru as any verse out of the 700

verses of the Gita can act as one's Guru. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji emphasised on *sadhna and seva*, on self perfection and social efficiency which is again compatible with the teachings of the Gita. His other teachings like straightforwardness (*sezar*), truthfulness (*pazar)* and purity (*shozar)*, surrender to God, getting rid of self ego and maintaining silence are also found in the pages of the Gita. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is also considered as a promoter of interfaith harmony. He called Brahman or the ultimate reality as a tree whose branches represent different religions of the world. The same idea is found in the Gita where Lord Krishna says that I accept every one who walks on my path.

## IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE BHAGAVADGITA

There is nothing in life which the Gita does not teach and as such there is a big list of the sub-headings of subjects which are emphasized in the Gita. Out of these subjects I have selected the following five sub- headings on which I am writing in the pages to follow:

The Gita gives trumpet call for *lokasamgraha.*

The Bhagavadgita is the jewel of Indian literature.

The Bhagavadgita is a scripture for verifying diverse faiths.

The Gita teaches working in God Consciousness.

The Gita protects its Devotees.

### The Gita Gives Trumpet Call for Lokasamgraha

The Bhagavadgita lays utmost emphasis on *lokasamgraha* meaning collective good of the world. The Gita underscores that work done for *lokasamgraha* not only prevents destruction of the world but it also contributes towards world's social efficiency. While teaching *karma yoga* to Arjuna in the Gita, Lord Krishna gives the examples of King Janaka who attained perfection by performing selfless work directed towards well being of all. Lord Krishna also cites His own example of working for *lokasamgraha* when He says

*in the Gita* that in the three worlds there is nothing He has to gain for Himself nor there is any thing which He cannot gain but still He is engaged in working for the good of the world (3-22). And if He did not work selflessly the worlds would perish because people would follow His example and abstain from selfless activity (3-23). Lord Krishna further states that the difference between an ignorant and the wise is that while ignorant works in his own interest, the enlightened performs unattached work for the good of others (3-25). This underlines that selfless work is God's work.

For a man with an average understanding working for his own good remains his priority. At best he may work for the good of his own people or community. But the urge to do something for the good of the world remains a distant idea with him. *Lokasamgraha,* as taught in the Gita, aims at working for the good of all irrespective of caste and creed without any inclination to work exclusively for your own sake or for the good of your own people. The Gita does not hesitate to call those sinful who work only for their own sake (3-13).

Working for *lokasamgraha* is possible when one developes an attitude of accepting others as an extension of one's own self, that is when one identifies himself with the rest of the world. The Gita calls this equanimity of vision, *samadrsti.* The Gita states that wise look with equal eye on a learned Brahmana, a cow, an elephant, a dog and an outcaste (5-18). Equal vision means seeing the same principle Brahman in things which are dissimilar. It is to see the same principle in all manifestations, including one's own self, which is not affected by qualities seen outwardly. It is man's highest duty to identify himself with the whole world and when that happens he considers others like himself. Such a person judges the happiness and sorrow of others by the same standard as he applies to himself. A perfect example of working for *lokasamgraha* is that of the Sun, which gives light to all without any preference.

Generally people have a narrow view of the purpose of work. They feel that work will help them obtain something which they

do not have and want to possess. The real purpose of work is not to statisfy selfish desires because if that be so then God would not have worked for the good of the world. People who have a selfish attitude should accept that working for the good of others is one of their duties. When the duty idea is superimposed on work, man is encouraged to work selflessly for all. When constantly working for others becomes a habit then a person understands what is *niskam karma* or desireless work. As men advance on the path of perfection, the duty idea drops away but not the selfless work which flows automatically out of them. For a prefect person and those striving for perfection doing good to others is always spontaneous. He works for others even at the cost of his personal discomfort. For doing good to others a man needs to bring within himself an attitudinal change to set his mind on seeking the welfare of all. He has to develop within himself *sarva bhava* or a feeling of concern towards all on the basis of equality or sameness. Man has to go beyond or transcend the sense of I and mine and replace it with the sense of we and ours. He has to change his settled behaviour from *sva* (own) to *sarva* (all). When God Himself states in the Gita that He is same towards all beings (9-29) then why not man, who is essentially divine, acquire the same attitude at showing concern for others as it is necessary for human development as well as for the improvement of social health.

Service, *seva* or working for the welfare of others, is one of the ideals of Indian culture and heritage which was expounded by Swami Vivekananda. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji went to the extreme extent by declaring that one should forget his own salvation and go all out to serve those who are poor and who are in distress. He exhorted mankind to live for others because he felt that those who work only for their own sake are more dead than living.

Best results in selfless or social service are obtained when social workers themselves are men of good qualities. Service can be done by many but selflessness and generosity in social service is predominantly noticed when those who undertake social work are

good at heart, sincere and compassionate. Such people are totally committed to social work. They see God in all when they serve and are not interested in their own name or fame to be associated with their work for *lokasamgraha.*

The messege of the Gita for the social workers is to perform social service from a non-sectarian angle giving higher priority to social good than personal good. The Gita further highlights that in order to determine the right course of action one should also account *lokasamgraha* as social service being about harmony and peace in the society. The other thing one must remember is that while doing service to the others one should not ignore his obligations towards his own family.

In the materialistic world of today man shows very little concern to safeguard his natural surroundings. Not only that, he is becoming an instrument in causing environmental degradation. In order to check this trend man must accept his social obligations towards nature by including environmental protection and afforestation in his *lokasamgraha* activities in accordance with the teachings of the Bhagavadgita related to the good of the world.

## The Bhagavadgita – The Jewel of Indian Literature

The greatest miracle of Lord Krishna is before us in the form of the Bhagavadgita. It is a unique philosophical and cultural literature which transcends limits of time, space and national boundaries and influences people all over the world. It has shaped lives of countless generations in the past and would continue to do so in future to people all over the world. The Bhagavadgita has literary excellence and is referred as literature of literatures as it gives composite culture for men of all nations, of all races, of all religions, creeds, temperament and conditions of human existence. Truth, Beauty and Peace find their ultimate expression in the Gita. Similarly, the Indian philosophy finds its briefest, finest and simplest expression in it. The Bhagavadgita lends itself to many interpretations because it presents multifaceted, multilayered

treatment on range of issues which are encountered by human mind. When the knowledge of Gita was given, there was no other religion. The Gita in that sense is not a Hindu scripture but a scripture of mankind. At many places in its text the world *manav* is used implying that its teachings are applicable to entire humankind. The Gita asks you not to be confined to any social group or community but remain a member of mankind. The Gita thoughts are so vast and all embracing that they can be treated as a wonderful study of human mind and its study makes one work at the highest level. Though the Gita was given to the world in the midst of turmoil and tension in the battle field Kurukshetra, it does not ask people to fight against each other. It emphasizes that man should fight two battles, the outer and the inner. The outer battle should provide solutions to day to day problems relating to family, society and business and the inner battle should be fought against inner enemies like desire, anger, greed, envy, pride and unrighteousness. The aim of fighting these battles is to ensure that human life becomes beautiful and meaningful. The Gita recommends full active life for man in the world with the inner life anchored on external spirit. All problems of human life and personality are mentioned in the Gita and their cure is suggested. It says that man should meet challenges of life with courage, equanimity and with knowledge of self. It also asks man to cultivate persistence and perseverance to overcome disappointments and to acquire an optimistic outlook.

The Gita advocates that the first step of good management is to manage oneself. The Gita is a management science which places metaphysics above human values and human values above social science. It says that religious ethics must control social order if common life is to be made decent and dignified. It stresses on complementarity and not competition. The Gita lays utmost significance on one's own efforts and struggle. It says that there is happiness in struggle and end results taste sweeter. Those who gain spiritual experience of the Gita with their own efforts can truly guide others because they do not follow any short cut. They know

every inch of their way. They are much higher than those who seek blessings of noble men or have dip in holy waters. The Gita is a great harmoniser of wider and larger meanings given to laid-down concepts. The Gita is a great revaluator and reconcialator. It is a down to earth scripture.

Four *yogas* are explained in the Gita which are *karma yoga* a path of selfless action; *jnana yoga* or path of knowledge; *bhakti yoga* or path of devotion and love and *dhyana yoga* or path of meditation. The Gita says that meditation is a necessary condition with all the three paths of work, knowledge and love. That is why the Gita does not talk about meditation in a big way. In the Gita devotion forms the final note for a meditative *yogi*. The Gita teaches that we should develop equanimity or evenness of mind towards favourable and unfavourable conditions. We should treat pleasure and pain, gain and loss, honour and dishonour alike. When we make our mind free from attachment and aversion, then alone can we achieve evenness of mind. Along with evenness of mind we also have to acquire a sense of equality or equal vision. Equal vision or same sightedness is the basic principle of secularism as defined in our Constitution.

The Gita lays utmost emphasis on action or performance of one's duties. It says action is the law of life and without action living is impossible. If a person does not perform his duties, he incurs sin. It also emphasizes that one cannot attain perfection if one withdraws from work. The Gita takes us on a higher plane when it teaches that duties are to be performed without any selfish motive, without any attachment to work and without any desire for the fruits of action. The Gita teaches renunciation in action and not renunciation of action. Life dedicated to duty is life fulfilled. If we perform our duties sincerely and skillfully, we advance in the spiritual plane. The Gita says *yoga* is skill in action.

The Gita presents truth in a simple way. In the world of today, simple truth is not understood by a common man because people are attached to truth in a complicated presentation. It is a

fact of life that simplicity leads to harmony. The Gita teaches that same ultimate reality called God can be thought of and approached in different ways. The goal may be the same but people are coming from different background and are inspired by different prophets and scriptures.

The manner in which people relate to same ultimate Reality will necessarily be different. The teachings of the Gita coincide with the concept of pluralism, especially Indian pluralism. Pluralism suggests that our faith is most suited to our requirement and we do not have to emulate other faiths. Pluralism gives full dignity to all faith. If God is present in other faiths, that does not reduce His presence in our faith.

The Gita asks you to remember God at all times even while you are working. It recommends attainment of God consciousness – the vision of God in mind and not necessarily in eyes. It says that obstacles for union with God lie within and not without. Union with the Divine may be achieved and maintained in the midst of worldly affairs provided you can rid of yourself of your evil tendencies, particularly desire, anger and greed which the Gita calls as three gateways to hell.

At the end of its teachings, the Gita asks you to surrender to God and God will liberate you from all sins. When you understand what surrender means then you will be a co-partner in God activities.

You would then transcend all laws of conduct and you would be liberated from all *dharma*, "Do's" and "Don'ts". Divine power within you will free you from all sins and evils and lift you above human standard of virtues. You will live and act in spontaneous right and purity. Divine will enact His own will and work through you, not for your personal desire but for the world purpose, for your own good and good of all. The battle will be His and victory will be His, even though you may take credit for it. When you surrender to God He will lead you to complete Divine life.

The Gita does not give a religious model but a model which is presented for the good of man living any where in the world, the family of God. Those who study the Bhagavadgita must ensure that the Gita is expressed in simple words without taking shield of Sanskrit to sound scholarly. There are many repetitions in Gita which indicate that it is meant for men of average understanding as repetitions are common teaching device. The Gita says that life is meaningful only when it could be of some use to others.

Lord Krishna's teaching to Arjuna which is contained in the Bhagavadgita is India's greatest heritage as it contains words of God. Therefore, the Bhagavadgita should be declared as a National Scripture of India. It would be most appropriate if India forms an International Society of Gita Consciousness (ISGCON) for spreading the teaching of the Gita in all corners of the world. All that a man needs in life is found in the Gita - a book for dynamic living. It contains just 700 verses which give intense practicality to life. The Gita is a complete *shastra, yoga shastra* for attaining highest wisdom, *Brahma vidya*. It provides guidance in crises and confusion when institutions no longer provide the answer. The Bhagavadgita is a perfect guide to those who aspire to build a prefect personality – a harmonious development of hand, head and heart. The Gita is the right scripture for promoting interfaith harmony, global consciousness and international integration.

### The Bhagavadgita – A Scripture for Unifying Diverse Faiths

The Bhagavadgita, the great Indian text which forms part of Mahabharta, is universally accepted as a scripture for mankind as it promotes global consciousness and international integration. It has already been translated in more than seventy five world wide languages and more than two thousand of its editions have come out to date. The Bhagavadgita is a practical science of life and a science of human possibilities which covers all issues relevant to human life. It explains every type of problem that is faced by human mind and gives clear cut ways of solving them. The problems being human they remain the same irrespective of time and place

and it is for this reason that the Gita has such a tremendous appeal even today as it had some five thousand years ago when it was first spoken by Lord Krishna to Arjuna in the battle field of Kurukshetra. The Gita is a world class literature on psychology and philosophy which is closely related to life and is ideally suited for all occasions. Its teachings are all embracing which demolish national boundaries and transcend regionalism, caste, creed, cult and sect. Its message is so universal that it can be adopted by all systems and ideologies without any reservations. The teachings of all faiths, saints and philosophers run parallel to the teachings of the Bhagavadgita. It is regarded as a tree with its branches contain secrets of all *shastras*. First and foremost Lord Krishna in the Gita exhorts mankind to stand up and fight the battle of life both within and without. He asks man not to flee from duties and responsibilities of life but live adventurously and enthusiastically by joining the mainstream of life while remaining unaffected by the events of the world. The timeless message of the Gita does not refer to only one histroc battle between Kauruvas and Pandavas but to the eternal conflict between good and evil. The entire intent of the Gita is to align man's efforts on the side of righteousness or *dharma* since right and wrong are constant from the spiritual point of view. The duty idea emphasized in the Gita establishes that there is no place for an idler in the scheme of things for self-elevation.

The Bhagavadgita is a gate way to knowledge, a guide on love and a gospel of work. The Gita is an unequalled world text on work ethics. It explains that man seeking union with God need not become a recluse as union with God is possible in the midst of worldly life if one has a right attitude of mind. As work is unavoidable for a human being, man should perform it selflessly and efficiently for gaining spiritual upliftment as well as contributing towards social efficiency. The essence of *nishkama karma* or desireless action as taught by the Gita is aimed at purifying one's mind which gives knowledge automatically. Worldly work is not opposed to spiritual elevation and that is why the Gita asks man to live in two worlds simultaneously, the world of spirituality and the world

of matter. *Bhakti* or devotion taught by the Gita is passionless universal love for all which is not based on sentimentalism. The Gita places human values higher than social sciences unlike the west which subordinates human values to social sciences. The metaphpysical truth of the Gita has a practical shade. The Gita reconciles and harmonizes different ideologies, particularly the three major aspects of Indian philosophy – non- dualism, qualified non-dualism and dualism. It also synthesises the *yoga* of work, devotion and knowledge.

The Gita does not undermine meanings of various religious tenets but gives larger meaning to them. It accepts other opinions but gives out the best opinion based on analytical reasoning. For example, the Gita explains various forms of sacrifices or *yagnas* which are performed by people but concludes that knowledge sacrifice or *jnan yajna* is superior to all other sacrifices performed with material or otherwise. It supports renunciation or *tyaga* not of action but of desire, of attachment and of expectation of fruits of action. It says that *tyaga* need not be external but internal wherein man relinquishes all evils and worldly desires from within which bind a man to the cycle of life and death. The Gita is also a great revaluator of spiritual truths. Revaluating *sannyasa* by equating it with *yoga* is the biggest contribution of the Gita in the field of work. It teaches inner *sannyasa* of demoniac properties and not cutting off oneself with the world. The Gita offers no short cuts. It advocates seeking perfection step by step by any form of *yoga* taught by it which suits the temperament of the aspirant. The Gita does not ask man to forcibly check the senses or suppress them. It recommends controlling, refining and sublimating the senses through inner blossoming.

The *yoga* of Bhagavadgita is original, large, flexible and many sided which is not confined to some exercises or breathing techniques as is commonly understood. One cannot grasp full implications of *yoga* unless one understands what is said of *yoga* in the Gita. The *yoga*, as expounded in the Gita, when regularly

practised brings about a revolution in one's attitudes and tendencies. The Gita omits technical side of *yoga* for better understanding of a common person. It underscores that equanimity of mind under favourable and unfavourable conditions and equal vision is *yoga* in the same sense as *yoga* is skill in action. The Gita says that good and evil coexist in a person and one alone enables oneself to realize God. It exhorts to erase one's ego completely because all conflicts arise from a feeling of separateness nourished by one's ego. The Gita says that liberation or *moksha* is to be attained while living and not after death by practising *yoga* as taught by it and by following the middle path and avoiding the extremes.

The Bhagavadgita does not advocate fixed time devotion to God. It asks people to remember God at all times and fight the battle of life. To those who pray at fixed times, the Gita advises that there is no need to offer expensive items to God. An offer of leaf, flower, fruit or even water is sufficient provided the offer is made with devotion and pure heart. The Gita does not attach any importance to ritualistic worship and advises one to rise above it for spiritual elevation. The Gita advises surrender to God only at the end of its teachings. The surrender taught by the Gita is active and not in the least passive or inclined towards weakness. The Gita advises us first to build ourselves up through self-assertion and faith in God and then surrender to Him to totally fill ourselves with God's presence which opens the way for Him to function through us. When we surrender to God we do not have to go any where for help as God takes care of us both in worldly and spiritual fields.

The karma theory explained in the Gita is not fatalism. It vibrates with the message of freedom based on rightful activity. Man has a free will and is responsible for all his actions. The Gita places man's evolution as well as his devolution in one's own hands. When we turn unavoidable work into *karmayoga*, it becomes a natural step for personal growth. Our fate depends largely on the quality of work which we do. The Gita says that even the worst

sinner can become saint if he acts rightly. The Gita is not a doctrine of "Do's" and "Don'ts". It asks man to act as per his judgement after reflecting upon the situation in hand. At the end of the discourse in the Gita, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna to reflect on what has been told to him and act as he thinks fit. This underscores that man is the maker of his destiny to a large extent.

Sri Aurobindo says that the effect of the teachings of the Gita is immediate and instantaneous. Arjuna who refused to fight his kith and kin in the beginning of the Gita admits in the end that his delusion has been dispelled and doubts cleared and he is ready to execute Lord Krishna's command. Lord Krishna says in one of the verses of the Gita that whatever way people worship Him, He accepts them because all men walk on His path. This brings out catholicity of the Gita religion where one God, without a second with different names and forms is worshipped by people belonging to different religions and faiths, as per their traditions. This single verse of the Bhagavadgita is sufficient to unify different faiths and religions and places them at par removing doubts and misunderstandings regarding superiority of one religion over the other. This verse is the key to success of interfaith dialogues when correctly understood and applied.

### The Gita Teaches Working in God Consciousness

The Bhagavadgita wants man to remain in God consciousness continuously without any break even while working. The Gita says that devotion to God and performance of worldly duties should go together without one being set aside for the sake for the other. There is a very powerful verse in the Gita whose opening line reads: "Remember Me at all Times and fight" (8-7). It emphasizes that while hands are directed towards work, the mind is continuously anchored on God. There are two important things in this verse – one is to "rember Me" at all times and the other to "fight". "Remember Me" at all times conveys that prayer is not a part time job but a full time activity leading to constant awareness of God. Fight means to fight the battle of life on two fronts – external

while performing worldly duties and man's inner battle between good and bad attributes till the bad is completely uprooted. This underscores that work and worship, which represent worldly and spiritual life, should coexist as there is no conflict between the two. In fact, the Gita wants us to live in two worlds of spirit and matter simultaneously. This verse also provides the answer to those who say that they cannot think of God because of their domestic and worldly duties.

By working in God consciousness all our work gets sanctified and a touch of sacredness comes in our outlook. Worldly problems magnify when we distance ourselves from God. On the other hand, when we focus our mind on God, we rise to a higher plane and the problems that we face appear small and are easily solved by God's grace. Patanjali in his *yoga sutra* has said that constant remembering of God is a prayer. Worldly troubles never enter the mind that dwells constantly on God. Adi Shankaracharya says in *Bhaja Govindam* that he alone is happy whose mind always revels on the Supreme. Madhvacharya, the founder of daulist school, teaches that one should always feel and think of God. All other prescribed "Do's" and "Don'ts" of life are secondary.

When our mind is constantly fixed on God, our mind remains under control and fear runs away from us and we always feel secured. We do not get unnecessarily entangled with the worldly objects that enter our mind through senses. We do not have to make a deliberate effort to turn our mind away from worldly objects; they themselves leave us alone. Not only that, our attitude towards worldly objects softens, so to say. Remembering God at all times helps us to identify with our true divine nature, and our attachment with worldly affairs reduces which automatically results in self-control. It gives us a feeling of closeness with God which casts off loneliness. Remembering God keeps us in a positive mental attitude inclined towards cheerfulness. When the mind holds on to God constantly, one remains unconcerned about the environment we are placed in. Ashtavakra, a great self-realized saint of

Mahabharata fame, says that a man established in God, neither runs to a forest in search of solitude nor does he seek a closed place. He remains the same everywhere and in all conditions. When our central thought is fixed on God, all other thoughts in our mind are subordinated and turned to God in right earnest. The great sage Vyasa warns by saying that he who wishes to think of God after he has finished all his duties is like the fool who wishes to bathe in the sea after the waves have subsided. Swami Chinmayananda, the founder of Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, had said that remembering God constantly divines all aspects of our life as well as living. A saint from South India states, "Oh Lord I will never forget you. But even if by chance I forget you, oh Lord do not forget me."

To those who remain in constant touch with God, the Gita has a few things to offer. Lord Krishna says in the Gita that to those who constantly remember Me every day with their mind on nothing else I am easily accessible (8-14). To those who are ever devoted to Me, I give them *yoga* of understanding by which they come unto Me (10-10). The great Yogi Jnaneshwar in his commentary on the Bhagavadgita says that when you think of God at all times, you live in present. Thinking of God does not allow you to think of past, (which as it is, is a useless exercise), like water flowing and going towards sea does not ever think of turning back to see how things left behind are getting on. He further says that as the disc of the moon loses her phases day by day from the Full Moon day and totally disappears on the *Amavasya* day, in the same way those who set their heart on God will gradually set themselves loose from the sense objects and ultimately be one with the Almighty. In the Bhagavatam it is recorded that those who hold the supreme tightly with intense longing and love none of their senses venture out in the wrong path and no untruth ever comes out of their mouths. The senses even when they enjoy the sense objects remain pure without being affected by any sin of contact like the Sun in the sky touches the entire universe with his rays, yet remains unaffected by contact even with impure objects.

It is a common experience that whatever idea one has in mind while one is awake, in the uppermost of his mind, that very idea appears in his dream while he is asleep. Similarly, about whatsoever entity mind of a person is thinking at the time of death, he the attains that after death in the next life. This is endorsed by the Gita which says that whatever idea stands in front of man at the time of death that very essence man cannot avoid getting after his death in the next life. That very thing the soul is reborn within next life. So why not keep the mind steady on the thought of God at all times as one cannot remember God all of a sudden at the time of death unless one remembers Him constantly and continuously. This is still more convincing since one does not know the time of death.

Continuous God awareness also lifts a man to a higher plane of worship above the ritualistic worship. Remembering God at all times means that you are worshipping God twenty-four hours a day and not just doing some ritualistic worship in the morning and evening. It is not possible to perform rituals twenty-four hours a day whereas this does not hold good for continuous remembrance of God which is possible for the entire duration of the day. Remembering God at all times is a spiritual practice which can be done twenty four hours a day. Remembering God at all times also means practising the teachings of the scripture like the Bhagavadgita that is performing acts in accordance with the guidance given in it. Such works result in personal elevation and contribute towards the efficiency of society.

### The Gita Protects Its Devotees

The Bhagavadgita protects those who practise it. Lord Vishnu declares in the Gita Mahatmya that those who take shelter and refuge in the Bhagavadgita find solution to their problems besides moving towards their personal perfection. Lord Vishnu calls the Gita as His beautiful home with whose knowledge He rules the three worlds. He further says that those who follow and practise the teachings of the Gita are able to maintain their families free

from disasters and calamities. Such people also do not have any fear from wordly life.

In the Bhagavadgita Lord Krishna, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu, gives assurance to His true devotees that they would be looked after by Him if such devotees worship Him exclusively. There are verses in the Gita where Lord Krishna emphatically expresses concern for His devotees. We can examine these one by one. In verse 31 of Chapter 9 Lord Krishna proclaims, "My devotee is never destroyed." This is the *mahamantra* of the Gita for mankind. Lord Krishna silences those who have any doubt on His worship by stating this unchallengeable truth that His devotees shall know no failures if only they worship Him with full faith. Such devotees shall not be affected by worldly problems as they would get courage and power to get over them. They will not act wrongly nor will they lower their image in their own eyes and in the eyes of the world.

In verse 22 of Chapter 9, which appears almost in the middle of the Gita Krishna states that, "those who worship Me alone and thinking of no other, I take the entire responsibility of securing for them which is not already possessed by them and preserve for them that they already posses." This is the most sacred verse of the Gita. Worshipping Me alone means exclusive devotion when the heart and mind of the devotee are filled with God and where no effort is required for remembering Him as one shall have entire trust on Lord Krishna, the Supreme Self, one without a second. The devotee may direct his mind to attend to day to day work but the thought of God stays at the top of his mind. It also means that the devotee shall have no relish for anything except the Lord. The devotee may be anywhere; the Lord will follow him like a calf following the mother cow, taking responsibility both at spiritual and secular levels of the life of the devotee.

In verse 58 of Chapter 18 of the Gita Lord Krishna assures His devotees that if they are ever in communion with Him in mind, they will overcome all obstacles by His grace. The obstacles

may be on the path of spiritual life or worldly life. To be ever in communion with God means total self surrender to God. God's grace is blowing but one has to make an effort to catch it. Sri Ramakrishna says that though the wind is blowing everywhere on the sea, only those sailors move on the correct path who keep the sails of their boats unfurled. This establishes that self effort is required to remain ever in communion with God to attract God's grace. Many obstacles in our life are imaginary which are created by confused mind, false fears and anxieties. Only by God's grace man can remove confusion from his mind to perceive things clearly as they are.

God listens to His sincere devotees who think of Him with undivided mind. In verse 14 of chapter 8 Lord Krishna states that "one who constantly thinks of Me, not thinking ever of another, to him I am easily reached or easily attainable." Easily attainable means that a devotee can be rest assured that he is not alone and God is always there to hold his hand. The only condition being that the Divine consciousness must be maintained by the devotee constantly and continuously all through the day and not during specific period of time or days. This positive assertion by Lord Krishna has a very important significance to a true and sincere devotee. Thinking of God continuously also removes all ill traits from the inside of a devotee.

How does the Gita describe a devotee of God? Devotion, according to the Gita, is not just uncontrolled emotionalism but is a positive, vibrant, and dynamic state of mind built on a moral foundation. Devotion is not that much a flower offering to God (even though God accepts flower from devotees), but it is more of development of divine virtues. In chapter 12 of the Gita, Lord Krishna gives a list of virtues of divine qualities which an ideal devotee must possess for becoming eligible to receive love of God. A devotee may love God but what is more important is that God should also love his devotees. And God will only love His devotees when they are pious and virtuous and express divine qualities

through their conduct. These divine qualities or virtues are: A devotee should be friendly and compassionate without any touch of hatred. He should be devoid of possessiveness and arrogance, ever content and contemplative. He should remain alike in happiness and misery by maintaining equanimity of mind. He should be self controlled and firm in conviction. He should be dedicated to God with all his heart and soul. Devotee should be desireless, pure, resourceful, unattached, unworried and without a sense of self-centeredness. The devotee should be free from elation, anger, sorrow and craving and should neither seek the pleasant nor shun the unpleasant. He should be alike to friend and foe, alike in honour and insult, alike in heat and cold, alike in praise and blame, contented, homeless in the sense that he is not attached to his home as the entire world is his home and he should be steady in mind. And most importantly, the devotee should give no trouble to the world and should adopt a state of mind when he is also not troubled by the world and is free from anxieties, anger, fear and envy. Thus, we see that a true devotee is not a man of worship alone but above all an elevated person who has become so by practising the divine traits or the moral virtues as given above. Devotion to God would bring changes in man's heart to the extent that he becomes god-like himself to enjoy protection from the Lord. Swami Vivekananda considers devotion (*bhakti*) as a real and genuine search for God, a search beginning, continuing and ending in love in its purest form. He further says that in its advanced state devotion means complete surrender to God, not only emotional surrender but an intellectual apprehension to realize the supreme truth.

It is because of all this profound knowledge that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji attached a lot of importance to the study and practise of the tenets of Shrimad Bhagavadgita.

**Lt. Col. R.K. Langar**

## B. THE BHAGAVADGITA

Bab Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji would read the Bhagavadgita. Why he focused on that recitation? This is really an inspiring thought for the devotees. The Bhagavadgita is not merely a sacred text, but the direct inspiring words of Bhagavan Krishna, who lived the life in the *Dwapar Yuga* (the third age, era). He lived the life of a foster child, getting the maternal love from Yashoda Maiya, and paternal guidance from Nand Baba. He played the pranks of a child and showed the *Vishwarupa Darshan* (Universal Form) to his fostermother Yashoda, while opening mouth, when he was scolded not to take any mud/soil, as it would disturb his health. This is verily known as the *lila*/play of the Divine. Yashoda wanted only that, but the Gopis wanted the eternal musical sounds, which are but the *Samaveda* directly sung by the Lord. Ultimately, Lord Krishna gave the message, which is of universal substance, for "*Atmano Mokshartham Jagat Hitaaya Cha.*" (For the liberation of the self and good of the world at large.)

### MAIN FOCUS OF THE BHAGAVADGITA

1. The Bhagavad Gita is revered as the sacred scripture, next to the Vedas.

2. It is the main portion of the Mahabharata, as we find Mahabharata like situation around ourselves every where, how to face the challenges in life. The problems are to be resolved by being the *sthita prajnya* (steadfast intellect) like Arjuna fighting with the evil force at the Kurushetra battle field.

The language of this text is Sanskrit in the form of poetry and its prologue "*Parthaaya Pratiboditaam Bhagawatha Naarayanena Svayam, Vyaasena Grathitaam Puraana Munina Madhye Mahabharata,*" is being recited by the devotees, to create an atmosphere of being in tune with the Divine.

It consists of seven hundred shlokas (verses) of two lines each, covered in eighteen chapters.

During the recitation, we get a vivid view of the *Virat Purusha*, which is the expansion of microself into the macroself. It is the key to become THAT – or *Soham*. Bab Ji would be seen reciting his *Dhyana Mantra*, for realising THAT.

Krishna gave the concept of *nishkama karma yoga* to the world, and the message of fighting the evil, through *dharma*. That is why Bab Ji was seen helping the defence personnel during Kargil war, though he had left this mortal body in the year 1968.

Dr. C.L. Raina

## C. THE PANCHASTAVI

Bab Bhagavaan would at times read some of the *shlokas* of the Panchastavi.

*Panchastavi Patthаm* would charge the whole atmosphere of the *ashram*, at Nai Sarak Guddod Bagh with Divine radiance. The power of the Shakti, which creates, the worlds, says *Trikaaran Ruupa,* with the primal *Agamic* sound which is AUM. It is the conceptive self-extinction of Being, which works itself, out in the *Brahmanda,* which is universe, as substance. It is *Chaitanyam* – the object of consciousness, which represents the *Adyaa Shakti Bhavani.* The Panchastavi is the synthesis of the Divine attributes of the Tripura Devi, revered as the Tripura Sundari, who is none else but Ragnya Devi, according to the saints and sages; Bab Ji would also say so. The First canto is revered as *the Laghustavah.* The word *laghu* means light, not heavy. It means that the *dharana* or the Divine attributes should be contemplated upon Her Light ones, as the *sadhaka* in the initial stage cannot resist the intensity of the luster of Sri Raja Rajeshwari. Our first decisive step out of our human intelligence is an ascent to the higher ones, starting from pure *bhakti*, like that of a newborn baby, who conveys not through his/her word but the cry, which is *Adi Spanda,* the very breath of his/her soul. The aspirant calls her *Jyotirmayi, Vaangmayi.* She is the Mother of Effulgence, as She is *Ambaa* the affectionate Mother of the devotee The word carries the great weightage, as She is the protector of the universe, and so of the devotee, in particular *Aim Klim Shrim* are the *Bija Mantras* of the Tripura Devi. Though She is *Amba,* she assumes the form of Chandi to destroy the Asuri – demonic forces. A *bhakta* is the central being in the Panchastavi, who sees the Tripura around him/her. A concentrated mind for *sadhana* is the quintessence of the *Panchastavi Patthаm.*

Her divine message is in the *Sakala* form of the universe, where She holds the hand of the devotees, to make them evolved in the higher consciousness of *sadhana.*

The Second canto is dedicated to *charcha* the spiritual deliberation of the Divine Mother. *Charcha* is based on the *buddhi tattva*. Though it is more intellectual in nature, yet it develops the devotion, where the *shlokas* are described in the philosophical manner. This happens to be the stream of the cosmic moment. Beyond the elementary understanding of the Divine Mother as *Amba* a devotee wants to go in for *Ananda*, as the first *shloka* implies. It is Truth Beauty and Goodness where the Bija Mantra *Klim* gives rise to primary, ultimate and eternal life. It is the foundation of oneness in ecstasy.

The third canto *Ghatastava*, which gives the *bhakta* the experience of the Divine attributes as *Devi, Trayambaka – Patni, Parvati, Sati, Trailokyamata, Shiva, Sharvaani, Tripura, Mridaani, Varada, Rudrani, Katyayni, Bhim Bhairvi, Chandi, Sharvari, Kali, Kaalakshye, Shuulini*. This is the great pitcher of profound sublimity, where the intuitive mind sees the Divine in complete surrender to the Tripura – the consort of Shiva. The content and the concept merge together and the reason and mind/*antahkaran* go together in search of that great pitcher, which is but the Divine grace. Transformation takes place, and the devotee sees the Divine realms around him, or her.

The Fourth canto is named as *Ambastava* – a laudation to the Divine Mother. The *Ishta Devi* is propitiated with all the devotion, keeping the norms of the *Kulachara* in tact. She is seen with all the Divine weapons. She is *Girija*, the Parvati, who is pure *Sattva* like the pure gold, where there is no *rajas* and no *tamas*. In this *puja* (worship), the Devi blesses with *chitta shuddhi*. This is the period of self-analysis; of complete surrender to the Divine Mother.

The last Canto is *Sakala Janani Stava* – dedicated to the Mother of all existence. Bab Ji would emphasize to study the Panchastavi whole heartedly in order to arrive at the feet of the Mother Sharika.

Dr. C.L. Raina

# CHAPTER - X

# FOR THE GOOD OF MANKIND

## A. OUR SPIRITUAL HERITAGE AND BHAGAVAAN GOPINATHJI

### SOME REFLECTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

My main aim in this write-up is to give the reader a fair idea of how I see Bhagavaan Gopinathji as a saint, keeping in view the broad contours of our spiritual heritage as Kashmiri Pandits. I shall attempt to spell out how and why he made an extraordinary impact on his devotees during his life time; this impact became phenomenal after he attained *mahasamadhi* (leaving the mortal coil) in 1968. He did not preach or teach a cult of his own. His speech was mostly whispered and his teaching never eloquent; he never delivered a religious discourse. If at all he taught, it was through gestures and monosyllables. As his mute teaching spread around, it was his *chamatkar* or spiritual effulgence that worked wonders; it cast its spell on the seekers in bulk. His silent message as 'Bhagavaan consciousness' has made him known globally and now he is hailed as a *Jagat Guru* (the world teacher). His devotees are active throughout this country and also in several countries abroad including the UK, the USA, Switzerland and Australia (where a spiritual centre is dedicated specifically to the Bhagavaan).

As the *Sarswat* Brahmins of Kashmir, we have a proud culture of our own and a spiritual heritage going back to the Vedic times. We can, in fact, take legitimate pride in being the progeny of the great Vedic rishis (sages). While the Kashmiri saints are our guiding lights in the background, we must bear in mind that the Vedas and the Upanishads, including the Gita, are the main fountains of knowledge for us. There is another stream of knowledge that we can acclaim as a proud legacy, I mean the pristine stream that had gone into oblivion until it was reclaimed as Kashmir *Saivism* or *Trika* – comprehending the three doctrines of Man, the Universe

and the 36 *tattvas* (the basic categories or principles of the process of universal manifestation in Kashmir Shaivism). The *Trika* stresses three entities as divine shaktis: *jnana* (the power of knowledge), *iccha* (the inseparable innate Will Power of Parama Shiva), and *kriya* (the power of action). The Saivities maintain that the *Purusha* (as Siva in a limited form), in view of its association with the body, takes up three impurities or *malas*: *anva* (innate ignorance of the *jiva*), *maayiya* (limitation of the power of knowledge) and *karma* (limitation of the power of action); it is because of these *malas* that the nature of Self gets clouded. As the *Purush*a attains Self-recognition in accordance with the *pratyabhijna* doctrine, it realizes its identity with Siva. In this context, the *Saivites* also talk of the three *upayas* (path or means of self-realization) that help the *sadhak* in overcoming the effects of the three *malas*. It was *Vasugupta* through whose efforts the stream of knowledge, mentioned as Kashmir *Saivism*, flowed afresh for us; guided by Lord Siva himself in a dream, it was he who found the *Siva Sutras* inscribed on a rock named appropriately as the *Shankarpal*.

I consider it relevant here to stress that the *Trika* philosophy is not altogether different from *Vedanta*. It should be said to the credit of the *Saivite* Masters like Utpal Dev, Abhinav Gupta and others that they expounded novel truths in a distinct way. The two philosophies, in effect, complement and reinforce each other in spite of some points of difference between them. Both are essentially non-dualistic and uphold man's innate divinity. The quintessence of the Vedic and *Saivite* texts is the sacred symbol *Aum* and the mantra recommended is *Soham* (uttered in the reverse form as *hamsa*).

Bettina Baumir, a well-known *Saivite* scholar, points out that the concept of *samta* – meaning harmony, balance or homogeneity – that one comes across in several *Saivite* texts, including the *Siva Sutras*, can form an important basis for universal ethics. Both mystical and metaphysical in nature, the concept is common to the Buddhist, *Vedantic* and *Saivite* traditions. The Buddha was

compassionate as a seer, and he was all for alleviating human suffering. The concept of *samta*, also upheld in the Gita, is basic to the principle of universal harmony as much as it is to that of universal responsibility. A religious view of life, that stresses the value of compassion and stands for universal peace, seeking an end to human suffering, has to accommodate the concept of *samata* as vitally important to humanity.

The *Shakta Marg* also has to be mentioned alongside *Saivism* as far as our past practice as Kashmiri Pandits is concerned. Siva and Shakti are inseparable as the bipolar aspects of *Ardhanarishwar*. In actual fact, *Shaktivaad* has influenced our community in a remarkable way. Most Pandits are basically worshippers of the Divine Mother – by whatever specific name we may choose to call her. That is why we continue to be distinguished clanwise from one another on the basis of our *ishtadevis* (Chosen Forms of Goddesses): *Sharika, Ragnya, Zala, Shailputri, Jeshtadevi* and others. That also explains why the Kashmiri Pandits attach special importance to the observance of *Ashtami* as a sacred day in the bright fortnight of each month. Even those who do not observe a fast, at least remain strictly vegetarian on this *tithi* (day) out of their reverence for the Mother Goddess. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji too was a great *Devi Bhagat* in his own right, as is shown by the frequent visits he paid to Tulamulla and Hari Parbat during his life-time.

As *Saivites* or *Shaktas*, we owe a lot to the great Shankaracharya who rehabilitated Hinduism in India. With his intellectual prowess and spiritual vigour, he was able to silence the Buddhist opponents in discussion. Hinduism found its feet again as a result of his untiring efforts and then regained its ascendancy in India. The Buddhists lost their stronghold in Kashmir and Shankara's *advaita* philosophy based on *Vedanta* prevailed in the Valley too. It is a pity that he is not rightly understood by those who are critical of his advocacy of *sannyasa*, he proved himself to be a great Karmayogin too; what he achieved as the preacher of *Vedanta* and as the founder of *Maths* was indeed colossal. A dynamo

of spiritual energy, his devotional verses in the *Saundarya Lahri,* however, give the lie to the view that he was unaware of *Mahashakti.* When he maintained "*Jagat mithya, Brahma satyam*" he wanted to convey that *Brahman* as the One is Real while the manifold appearances that characterise the *jagat* or sensory world, are only fleeting. It is in this context that the relevance of the Gita as a scripture with a positive messege for our saints and seers becomes evident. While upholding *sannayasa* and its superiority over karma, Shankaracharya stresses that *nishkama karma yoga* serves as the preparatory ground for *sannyasa* that leads to spiritual liberation. The Gita, however, lays the utmost stress on *nishkamakarma yoga* and, at the same time, does not extol external *sannyasa*:

*Anashrata karmaphalam karyam karma karoti yah*
*Sah sanayasi cha yogi cha na cha niragnir na chakrayah*

(It is the man who performs his duties without dependence on the fruits deserves to be called a *sannayasi* (renouncer) and a *yogin*, not the man who keep no fire or avoid action.)

It is as much in keeping with this verse of the Gita as with the *saivite* path that our saints in Kashmir have generally not donned the *sannyasi's* robe and have preferred staying indoors as householders to living in hermitages and temples. Though many of them avoided marriage and remained *brahmacharins* (celibate; a pilgrim on the path of realizing God) in earnest, they didn't disassociate themselves from household affairs. What is significant is that even as householders, many of our saints attained spiritual heights and some distinguished themselves as scholars, saint-poets and mystics.

Among our saint-poets, the name of the Sivayogini Lalleshwari, comes foremost to our minds. Her *vaakhs* verse-(sayings) are a rich storehouse of spiritual and worldly wisdom, which are known to have deeply impressed the popular imagination and psyche in Kashmir. Both Kashmiri Pandits and Muslims of the Valley have cherished these verse-sayings as gospel truths: the *vaakhs* serve the serious spiritual seeker as useful keys with which to unlock divine mysteries.

Roopa Bhavani, whom we regard as an incarnation of the Goddess Sharika, has also bequeathed to us a rich treasure of her sayings that have been compiled and published as the *Rahasyopdesha*. She has not been written upon while Lalla has been. Roopa Bhavani considered Madho Dhar, her father, as her Guru, but she calls Lalla her Param Guru. In line with Lalla, her *vakyas* too are the spontaneous utterances of an advanced and illumined soul. They too refer to the Vedantic and Saivite lore as Lalla's *vaakhs* do.

At this point, before I talk about Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji in some detail, it is pertinent for me to mention that during my moments of introspection, I look back and recall my pleasant encounters as a young man with several saints and mystics, who were accessible to me as a seeker of Truth. It has, indeed, been my good fortune to have come across a variety of saints in my life, some of whom were highly accomplished in the spiritual path. Through my association with them, I stood to gain immensely as a spiritual seeker. The Masters I met in the Valley itself included some who hailed from outside. My own reading, in later years, in the area of mysticism across faiths and cultures, has deepened my reverence for the different religions followed in this country. This has further served to shape my views on spirituality that I have articulated in my writings.

It was precisely in the sixth decade of the past century that my destiny brought me into contact with Bhagavaan Gopinathji on quite a few valuable occasions. I met the 'saint extraordinary' last in the year 1961, at a crucial time in my career, which proved to be a turning point in my life without doubt. It was through the Bhagavaan's blessings, which made their impact dramatically in an imexplicable and mysterious way, that I switched over to the teaching profession with my appointment as a Lecturer in English in September, 1961 (that involved a transfer from one Government Department to another). The new job proved congenial to my taste and temperament.

My association with Bhagavaan Gopinathji Ashram at Jammu dates back to the early nineties of the 20th century, following my

retirement from the University of Kashmir. In fact, I shifted from the University campus, Hazratbal, Srinagar, in May, 1990 to my present residence in Jammu. Having met the Bhagavaan several decades back at his house at Chondapora, Srinagar (precisely in September, 1961), I never again saw him in his physical form. I had virtually forgotten all about the saint during the intervening period. I heard from some of the Bhagavaan's admirers and knowledgeable devotees about his 'miraculous powers' that he had employed to safeguard the borders of our country in its armed conflicts with Pakistan in 1947 and 1965 and with China in 1962. I once again felt drawn to him by intense love and devotion. A couple of devotional lyrics on him, composed in Kashmiri by me, were published in an issue of the *Patrika* brought out by the Bhagavaan Gopinathji Trust periodically. It was later, in the early summer of the year 1995, that Sri Pran Nath Kaul, Secretary of the Trust then, called on me at my residence (504, New Plots, Jammu) and persuaded me to take charge of the *Patrika* as its Editor. I quietly accepted the assignment although I was convalescing then from an acute sickness caused by stress. He passed on to me relevant manuscripts in the shape of the contributions received from writers. I applied myself whole-heartedly to the task in hand; the work undertaken by me acted as a tonic for me and I got absolutely fit in a couple of weeks. Some years later, the journal was registered as *Shuddha Vidya* and I held the assignment until the year 2008.

During the period 1995-2008, I wrote invariably about the spiritual eminence of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji in a number of write-ups, including some editorials and articles specifically, that appeared in various issues of the literary journal brought out by the Trust. I had also the special privilege of editing, with Prof. Neeraja Mattoo as the co-editor, the volume titled *Bhagavaan Gopinathji Birth Centenary Volume: Our Spiritual Heritage*, which was published in the year 2000 A.D. It is in all humility that I say that I have been an earnest devotee of Sri Krishna since my boyhood days and I have no hesitation in saying that I look upon Bhagavaan Gopinathji as a reincarnation of Sri Krishna, my *ishtadev*. It is my belief that

the turbaned saint 'Gopinathji Bab' dressed in a Kashmiri *pheran* behaved *Shankara*-like with the *chillum* in his hands, that he would puff at almost non-stop at regular intervals. Or else, he would remain totally absorbed in *homa*, making oblations into the *dhooni* as a *Vedic rishi*. With an inborn spiritual insight into things, he was a *jnani*, a *bhakta* and a *karamayogi* in one. As a *bhakta*, he was fond of *bhajans* and *aarti*; he had an ear for music and would appreciate classical *ragas*.

He never behaved or acted as a traditional Guru, who initiates disciples formally. When he chose to grace a devotee, he transmitted *shakti* to the latter through a gesture or his look, or else he would do so through a puff offered to him from his *chillum*. I am saying so on the basis of what I have observed myself and also heard from others, and then drawn inferences. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was a gentle colossus as a born *siddha*, who could accomplish feats. Above all, he was compassionate to the needy and distressed and directed his energies to the welfare and service of mankind. Though highly patriotic, the good of the whole world was uppermost in his mind.

It is through divine grace that I remained involved in purposeful writing as a retired Professor. I see Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's hand in my taking up the literary work of the *Ashram* here connected with the propagation of his message for mankind. It is as if I was being put through a training course in performing selfless work as the means of my advancement in the spiritual path – remaining involved in writing on the Bhagavaan or on the events of the *ashram* proved to be a kind of *sadhana* for me. On the *Aashish* day, celebrated towards the conclusion of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's birth-centenary year in 1998, I was a recipient of the commendation certificate from the Trust given to a select number of devotees in recognition of their services to the Bhagavaan. Subsequently on a festive occasion, I visited Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's *ashram* at Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi. I turned the pages of an issue of the *Patrika* that was kept on display there. My attention got drawn to a piece I had written titled 'Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji

as our children see him,' based on the papers our youngsters had presented on a topic concerning the Bhagavaan. I felt thrilled as it dawned on me that I was engaged in doing something worthwhile as the Editor of the journal. I had come to Delhi for a few days only, and stayed at Pusa in the quarters occupied by my daughter and son-in-law (Sarafs). On the following morning, I sat for my usual meditation. I had a vision of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji – I found him seated in his usual pose, with the *takia* (cushion) to his right. During the visionary experience I heard these words spoken articulately in English (obviously meant for me): "Sit on this pillow of success." Thenceforth, the divine words continued to inspire me in performing my duty as the Editor of the journal in question, honestly and selflessly. In this connection, I am reminded of Sri Krishna's words spoken in the Gita: *Yogah karmasu kaushalam,* implying, "*yoga* is skill in action." The Bhagavaan evidently motivated me to do my assignment selflessly for my own spiritual well-being.

In the year 1997, I was approached by Sri Ravi Bhan, well-known singer and music-coposer. I functioned then as the Secretary of the Prem Sangeet Niketan, Jammu. Sri Bhan wanted me to help him in drafting his application for a junior fellowship advertised by the Dept. of Culture, HRD Ministry, Govt. of India. I rendered him the help he needed. I found on going through the advertisement that I too was eligible to apply for a senior fellowship in literature. It struck me that before I make the application, I should compose a devotional poem on Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. After Ravi Bhan left, I settled down to writing and composed the lyric in Kashmiri:

*Yi pooza myanyi tsa kar sophal*
*Rachhum tsai padikamalan tal*

The poem was later sung by Sri Ravi Bhan on the forthcoming birthday of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. It became very popular. Recorded in the cassette *shraddha* along with other *leelas*, that was gifted by Sri Vijay Malla to the Trust, it reached the market for sale. What is further mentionable is that I got the two-year fellowship

I had applied for, awarded to me by HRD Ministry, GOI – I believe it happened through Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's grace !

In the year 2002, I was invited by the Post-graduate Dept. of English, University of Kashmir, to conduct the *Viva Voce* of a Ph.D. candidate. On that occasion I delivered a lecture to the M.A. students on the contents of my book *Mysticism Across Cultures* published the same year a couple of months back. I utilized the opportunity for visiting Bhagavaan Gopinathji's *ashram* at Kharyar, Srinagar that I had only heard of but never seen. I was, in fact, very eager and curious to have a *darshan* (view) of the Bhagavaan's statue installed there. My former younger colleague in the Deptt., Prof. Mohd. Amin, was nice to take me in his car, driven by him, from the University campus to the *ashram* mentioned. It was around the noon on Sunday that we reached the destination. Since only a day back a hand-grenade had been hurled by militants at a target in the locality, the K.P. devotees had not stayed long for the *puja* offered at the *ashram*. All but two devotees had left, as Amin Sahib and I arrived there. The two inmates present including a K.P. lady who offered me a piece of *barfi* (Indian sweet made of milk) as *prasad* (food, fruit or drink that has been offered to God or to a saint) the other one was Sri Surinderji whom I met in the compound while leaving the place.

As I stood in front of the Bhagavaan's *murthi*, I closed my eyes and meditated for a few minutes, thinking of Babji. I had a vision instantaneously – I saw my own face with spectacles on; pleasant looking, it exuded some charm! There was an added feature – the head wore a turban. All this convinced me that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji had owned me and showered his grace on me. Then we left back for the University campus.

I consider it pertinent to mention that my book on mysticism published in 2002 has done well. Adjudged as the "best book in English" by the J&K Academy in 2006, it earned me a cash award, a citation and a memento. What is more significant, it was reprinted by the publisher in 2009; that shows that it has made its impact

on readers. Somehow, I feel beholden to Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji for its success, prefigured by my visionary experience at the Kharyar *ashram.*

Before I conclude this write-up, I should like to mention here that I have made bold to talk about my spiritual encounters with Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji and revealed things that I had earlier felt reluctant to write upon. No doubt, I had talked to some friends about the experiences in private. Pran Nathji convinced me, on phone, that in satisfying his wish I would be doing my duty as a true dovotee of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. I must reiterate here that it was he who had before hand entrusted to me the responsibility of handling the literary desk at the *ashram* here in 1995 on behalf of the Trust.

**Prof. A. N. Dhar**

# B. EXPLORING A BHAGAVAAN

## BIRTH OF A MAN

There is no duality. The timeless world and the world of change is one. The unchanging Absolute takes form, shines as a vision in the inner world of men, appears as flesh, becomes absorbed in imageless light, radiates as luminosity at a natural site, disperses as the consciousness of a multitude of beings, appears in human form, becomes a great force in the realm of cause and draws the awareness of thousands of people upward into bliss and fulfillment and at no time is different from the Infinite. This could be one small section of the path of the Divine. To track even one path of the dancing feet of the Absolute is beyond the capacity of men to articulate, but it is impossible to comprehend the infinitude of paths as the One assumes every form.

In this great churning of varied form and formlessness, light shines forth in places of the earth, perhaps for many thousands of years in the one place. The concentration of such sites is probably greater in Kashmir than in any other part of the world. Early writings portray it as being pre-eminently a region of holy sites. This part of the Himalayan mountains is no more sacred than the suffocating areas of Calcutta, and parts of it are probably no less polluted, but it would seem that cosmic currents of consciousness and power are collected and stored in this water-rich valley, and the experience of the Unlimited is easier to gain. That is why Buddha is reported in "Samyuktavasta" to have said that Kashmir was the best place for meditation and leading a religious life, and it is considered the homeland of two great religions – Mahayana Buddhism and Saivism. Moghuls called Kashmir, paradise. Some people find it easy to believe that both Moses and Jesus Christ chose the valley for their final resting place.

In a swampy region a few kilometers from the junction of Kashmir's two main rivers is the shrine of Khir Bhawani. The power as Goddess at the spring had come from Sri Lanka during

an earlier age. She was considered the all powerful primeval energy of creation and she had come to Kashmir in search of a new centre for her outflow of vitality. She settled amid the swamps at Tulamulla.

During centuries of oppression, knowledge of the exact location of the site was lost, but was rediscovered when more peaceful conditions returned. She is usually called either Khir Bhawani (Milk Goddes) or Ragyana (Queen of the Goddesses).

Once, at a gathering to venerate the goddess, the following verse was found on a piece of birch bark:

"I revere the one goddess
Who, having taken the position of the Supreme God
Is the Queen in reality.
Her form is made of light, adorned with the luster of twelve suns,
But she cannot be observed through the sense.
She is seated on a throne and enwrapped with serpents."

What is the nature of this light being? She accepts vegetarian food and abhors meat. Her preference is for milk products. She is repelled by impure conduct. There are many anecdotes of trouble arising through neglect of her sensitivity. It reflects the psychic state of Kashmir for its usually soft coloured water turns black when the state is threatened by calamity. It communicates with attuned individuals.

Vivekananda talked with it. Vivekananda was the most famous disciple of the great saint Sri Ramakrishna who explored many levels of consciousness and experienced the essence of major religions. Aubrey Menen in *The Mystics* wrote of Sri Ramakrishna that he changed history. A new impulse for unity began with him. After his death, Vivekananda attended a world congress of religions in United States of America wherein he left a great influence.

Vivekananda proclaimed "practical Vedanta" – Vedanta being the dominant philosophy in North India. One of the tenets of non-dualistic Vedanta is that the world of appearance is illusion. This view contrasts with the belief associated with devotion to Khir Bhawani that the world, as an embodiment of all powerful creative energies, is to be loved and cherished.

In 1898 Vivekananda travelled to Kashmir. He visited sacred sites and spent some days at the shrine of Khir Bhawani. Here he worshipped a child as the Divine Virgin and "looked into the face of death". The dark side of the world overshadowed him. He was disturbed by the fact that the sacred site of the Queen of the Goddesses had been smashed up by aggressive Moslems. "Why did not the Hindus protect the site from Mohammaden invaders?" he wondered. The Power said to him, "Even if unbelievers should enter my temples and defile my images, what is that to you? Do you protect me or do I protect you?" Whatever limitations of cunning that goddesses suffer in comparison with men, they are more conscious, more powerful and closer to the centre of creation.

A generation earlier a man from Srinagar was also rebuked by the goddess. Like most Indians he wanted a child in his family. Having become desperate, he adopted an infant. At the shrine he heard in himself an extraordinary message. The goddess herself intended to be born into his family! She was not pleased with the man's impatience.

Pregnancy arising after visiting sites of cosmic energy is common throughout the world. For such light beings to appear as a human consciousness is not uncommon. When a goddess lives through a human cycle, she does not disappear from her site. Consciousness is not limited like human bodies.

So when the man, Sri Parimoo saw the goddess and heard her speak, he did not assume that the site would become empty of power, but that the same power would also animate an infant who was to be born. Prasad Joo was looked on, by other people, as a

mystic and saint. When a daughter was born to his wife some months later, she was called Hara Mali and was looked on as an embodiment of the goddess of the spring, Khir Bhawani. The infant grew and eventually married. Like her, the husband was a saintly and unselfish person. She had five children.

In 1898 the family lived in Srinagar, capital of Kashmir. On June 22nd Vivekananda reached Srinagar. A few days later an observable change began in him, so that he searched for solitude and became preoccupied with death and the liberation beyond it. Yet he was only 35 years old. He made statements like: "It is a sin even to think of the body. It is wrong to manifest power." On 3 July he had an American flag made and probably wrote the poem, "to the Fourth of July" which his biographers called a passionate utterance of his own longing for the final freedom of the Infinite. On the third of July Hara Mali gave birth to her second son, Gopinath.

An infant carries in itself its future development. Its genetic structure is there to define physical and mental development. The origins of consciousness is more debatable – past incarnations, psychic inheritance from parents and other persons or beings, the position in time and place arising from astral and earth influences, direct supernatural infusion, could contribute. In the light of Gopinath's fully matured consciousness during middle and later life, the question can be asked, "Did his power come to him potentially at birth, or did it arrive from outside him at a later stage?".

We know that Vivekananda had carried a power which he himself had not developed. Back in 1886, three or four days before he died, Ramakrishna passed on his power to Vivekananda. It went into the young man like a mild electric current, causing him to lose outer consciousness. When Vivekananda awoke, Ramakrishna in tears, said to him, "Today I have given you my all and have become a fakir. By the force of the power transmitted by me, great things will be done by you. Only after that will you go to whence

you came." The power of the mighty works of Vivekananda was really Ramakrishna's.

Yet, after a week in Kashmir, Vivekananda was like a man empty of power. In fact, death should have terminated his bodily existence on August 2nd at Amarnath Cave. Ramakrishna had prophesied, "When he realizes who and what he is, he will no longer remain in the body." Vivekananda had believed from childhood that death would come to him in a Siva temple in the mountains. But in the moment of ultimate self-knowledge in the cave, a new element entered. The God of the cave, Amarnath (Lord of Immortality) granted him the grace not to die until he himself should choose to do so. Vivekananda lived for another four years, because that was his desire, not because his destiny and body willed it. During those four years a doctor said to him, "Swami Ji, it was almost death. Your heart ought naturally to have stopped beating. It has undergone a permanent enlargement instead."

Before he left Kashmir, the extent of his powerlessness was vividly realized when, contrary to his own intention, he obeyed the curse of a Moslem fakir. He had been a light of inspiration to truth seekers in the West, and an awakening power in the Hindu world, but the depth of the loss of force was indicated by his thought, "What good is Sri Ramakrishna to me? What good are all these realizations and preaching of Vedanta and the omnipotence of the soul within, when I myself cannot save myself from the diabolical powers of a black magician."

What had happened to the power that Ramakrishna had passed to Vivekananda? Philip wrote a letter to the editor of *Prabuddha Bharata* to find out what members of the Ramakrishna Order thought. "There is no record about Vivekananda's passing on the power that he had received from Sri Ramakrishna to anyone. According to some of our elders, Sri Ramakrishna withdrew the power from Vivekananda after the latter's first visit to America." (The journey to Kashmir came between the first and second visit to America.) "Be that as it may, our monastic tradition holds that

the power of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda is still working in our order in various ways especially through the line of Gurus in a kind of apostolic succession." There is no doubt that great power continues to work through the Ramakrishna Order as it serves God and mankind in an utterly selfless way in many parts of the world.

The question still remains, "Did the liberated Ramakrishna in the celestial realm take power from the still earth-bound Vivekananda while he was in Kashmir and pass it to the infant Gopinath?" There can be no proof. Perhaps the question should be, "Is there evidence to indicate that the life patterns of Gopinath were a continuation of the life patterns of Ramakrishnan. This question does not imply that Gopinath was the reincarnation of Ramakrishna, for neither men were imprisoned by the cycles of birth and death. Both have clearly demonstrated that they did not perish into the mindless tumult of karma, but remained fully conscious after they died. Neither does the question suggest that the power of Sri Ramakrishna is not working in the Ramakrishna Order. Power is universal and is always waiting to be seized by any person.

The relationship between the three becomes even more interesting when we lift our gaze beyond earth. It is possible for anyone to make a journey beyond earth by locking up the senses and turning away from the outside world. There are definite milestones on the way. After meeting our sexual and creative nature, we discover, in the shadows, the repressed parts of our personal consciousness. Through the doorway of a woman-form in men (or a man-form in women) we find ourselves in a world of deceased souls, powerful conscious beings, whirlpools of energy, regions of fire and overwhelming light. Carl Jung has thoroughly explored this sphere for Western travellers. In India it is the realm of gods and goddesses, of heavens and hails. Kashmir Saivism describes this stage of consciousness as the "dream" stage.

Beyond this world is an imageless void. The sages of Vedanta and Buddhism discovered a universe of limitless peace. But unlike the gods who could bring people to their heave, the sages could only point the way between opposites to a tranquil emptiness that transcended all heavens. To enter this world was liberation, and learning rather than sacrifices and worship were the way. Kashmir Saivism described this as "dreamless sleep", for its calmness and imagelessness resembled deepest sleep.

Beyond is a region of Pure Being that is the Source of the Universe. It is an ocean of luminous tranquility, but not of blankness for there is both form and movements within the ocean and images from it are reflected on earth. It is a place where there is subject only – no objects. It is perhaps like a perfectly blue but endless sky in which white clouds might seem to appear for a time and then disappear without trace into the blue again. The whole realm is a unity. It is the substance which earth reflects as in a mirror. It is more than a region of cause, it is Cause itself. When Stephen, the Christian martyr, was stoned, he looked up into this region and saw Jesus at the right hand of God.

Ramakrishna viewed this region too. This is what he reported (*The Life of Swami Vivekananda by His Eastern and Western Disciples*): "One day I found that my mind was soaring into *samadhi* along a luminous path. It soon transcended the stellar universe and entered the subtler region of ideas. As it ascended higher and higher I found on both sides of the way ideal forms of gods and goddess. The mind then reached the outer limits of that region where a luminous barrier separated the sphere of relative existence from that of the Absolute. Crossing that barrier the mind entered the transcendental realm where no corporeal being was visible. Even the gods dared not peep into the sublime realm, but had to be content to keep their seats far below. The next moment I found seven venerable sages seated there in *samadhi*. It occurred to me that these sages must have surpassed not only men, but even the gods in knowledge and holiness, in renunciation and love. Lost in

admiration I was reflecting on their greatness when I saw a portion of that undifferentiated luminous region condense into the form of a divine child. The child came to one of the sages, tenderly clasped his neck with lovely little arms and addressing him in a sweet voice attempted to drag him down from the state of *samadhi*. The magic touch roused the sage from his super conscious state, and he fixed his unmoving, half opened gaze upon that wonderful child. His beaming countenance showed that the child must have been the treasure of his heart. In great joy the strange child said to him, "I am going down. You must go with me." The sage remained mute, but his tender look expressed his assent. As he kept gazing on the child, he was again immersed is *samadhi*. I was surprised to find that a fragment of his body and mind was descending to earth in the form of an effulgent light. No sooner had I seen Naren (Vivekananda) than I recognized him to be that sage."

Ramakrishna identified himself with the child. Obviously the seven sages were just beyond the "dreamless sleep realm" but firmly grounded in the Creator's realm. The seven venerable sages called the *Sapta Rishi* are mirrored on earth as a cluster of rocks on the hillside of Hari Parvat, Srinagar, Kashmir.

To people who knew the mature Gopinath, the description of the sage would seem like a description of him. In his life time, Gopinath made no claim that he was a divine incarnation. Neither did he say that he was one of the invisible guides of humanity. At one time he did send a friend to convey his greetings to the cluster of rocks called *Sapta Rishis* on the hillside of Hari Parvat, but he gave no reason for his action. Only after his death did he reveal to some people that he was a guide of humanity.

Visions are not objective evidence. But if we assume that they express reality, we see in the realm of cause a child who appears as Ramakrishna, a sage who appears as Vivekananda and either the same sage, or another sage appearing as Gopinath. If Gopinath is one of the seven sages and his mother the sustaining energy of earth and he inherits the most illumined consciousness

of the 19th Century, we would expect a rare combination of the commonplace and incomprehensible. Is this the case, one wonders?

## FINDING A PLACE IN PHILOSOPHY

One of the most comprehensive philosophies in the world is Kashmir Saivism. Although based on ancient Saivite wisdom it was formulated by seers who had experienced every level of consciousness. These sages lived between the 8th and 11th centuries and stood as an affirmation of a positive and all embracing view of reality.

The first exponent of the philosophy was a mystic named Vasugupta who did not receive it from a human teacher. One tradition states that he was given it in a dream by Siva. The other tradition states that he found it from Earth - he first saw it in the form of a *sutra* (aphorisms) on a rock on Maha Deva, a mountain that looms above Srinagar, Kashmir. He was directed to the rock by the Great God (Mahadeva) who visited him in a dream. Vasugupta's pupil wrote commentaries on the original revelation and the knowledge of the philosophy spread. It was a period of glory and prosperity for Kashmir and the shining monism of the philosophy seemed to reflect the beauty and unity of the lovely valley.

In the philosophy, the totality of all is called Parama Siva, the Absolute Benevolence. There is nothing that is not the Absolute. The universe is within it, yet it is within a grain of sand. It sleeps in the stones, wakes in the plants, moves in the animals and has self-consciousness in people. In some philosophical systems, nothing can be said of the Absolute, but in Kashmir Saivism everything can be said of it, for everything has the voice of the Absolute in the sleeping, waking, dreaming of transcendent states. Of course, no words or images can define or articulate its infinitude.

Highest human consciousness can only bring to comprehend the Absolute when there appears differentiation in it. In the timeless and spaceless realm, more hidden from human sense than the

subatomic world, is the Absolute as Siva-Shakti. Although without any sort of manifestation, there is a duality that becomes consciousness and energy (power) when recognized in more limited terms. It is not that the duality can be separated any more than can the Sun and its light. Everything consists of Siva-Shakti in various proportions and various degrees.

Because the Kashmir Saivite seers experienced the highest levels of consciousness, they recognized various degrees of limitation in the comprehension of Siva-Shakti. In the free and unlimited unity, resting in its immeasurable bliss, there was discovered the stirring of a will to emerge into a multitude. The first hint of any sort of limitation came when the Totality was seen as a Creative Power who had a feeling of itself in the mirror of itself as an infinitude of beings and non-beings. Yet on this level of consciousness, there was no otherness – all remained One.

There are few masters in this sphere. Access to this realm of power and unity is available to all, for it is in this that we live and move and have our being and is, in fact, the reality and totality of our individual being. If few people are aware of it, the reason is that there is *Maya*, the power of otherness in which we see objects. In some Indian systems this level is called illusion and the whole objective universe is considered to be unreal. Kashmir Saivism recognizes that this separation is a part of the Divine play where the Absolute can cognize itself, as it were outside itself. But the Absolute outside itself suffers ignorance of its infinitude, and for this reason we see the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms a prey to illusion, struggling against itself and subject to futility. Through this ignorance mankind has limited creativity and knowledge and, being attached to sense objects, lives its individual lives limited to a set time and a single presence in space. The true nature of the individual is obscured and he finds a difference between good and evil and between himself and his environment. Yet even in this "normal" state of awareness there is a vibration that is none other than the movement within the Absolute. It is this movement

that "began" the process leading to creation and it is through this movement that human consciousness can travel beyond all limitations to recognize that its awareness is the awareness of the Absolute.

After Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji left his mortal frame on 28 May 1968, a group of people led by Sri S.N. Fotedar began to work for the formation of an *ashram* in his name. Money was needed, so a pamphlet was written about Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. In the pamphlet were the words, "Being a saint who gained mastery over the *tattvas* who could not only see through the past, the future and the present, but by offering great penance without regard to the welfare of his physical body, opposed the malignant forces disrupting the country. His method consisted in emitting vibration from various organs of the body – in tune with the universal cosmic vibration." This was the first written summary of the life of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, and as such, it is worth looking at closely.

He had mastery over *tattvas*. But what is *tattva*? English has no single word to express it, although it is sometimes translated as "element". It is the essential reality of a thing – its very being. It is through that that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji gained mastery over the fire *tattva* at some period prior to 1947. His concentrated blowing on coals for hours on end was probably the outward sign of the inward journey to mastery.

However, there were more significant *tattvas*. His mastering over the *Maya Tattva* gave him much power. This is the realm of magicians and miracle workers who have learnt, not only to produce illusion, but also to utilize the creative process for their purposes. Like Jesus, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji held the side, multiplied food, altered weather, knew the thoughts of people, appeared in different places at the same time and brought spiritual growth to seekers. As his predominant characteristics were benevolence and compassion, his ability in the realm of causes was used to benefit.

In the Divine world above the alluring and varied world of Maya, is a *tattva* called *Shuddhvidya*. A person with mastery of this *tattva* is able to let his awareness drift throughout the world and say, "I am all this, and all this is a part of my Self." He has the ability of bringing and holding all objects in conscious relationship with himself and with each other. Here we have the long forgotten characteristics of the Divine King who holds together, not only his people, but the energy forces in the environment.

It was because people saw the *Shuddhvidya Tattva* operative in him that Gopinath Ji was given the title, Bhagavaan – Glorious Lord. In him they saw Kashmir held together. He was the king who opposed the malignant forces disrupting the country.

Nand Lal described him as *Shah-en-Shah* – King of Kings. Who would know better than Nand Lal? He was one of the great seers of Kashmir; he left his body in 1973. He too had transcended the limitations of time and space and lived in a world of omniscience and spiritual ecstasy. Writing of him in *Kosur Samachar*, J.N. Bhat stated, "As another mystic of Kashmir had told me, Nandabab ("Father Nand") was in the spiritual field the defence minister of Kashmir with a whole host of other mystics unknown and unidentifiable working under him on different grades and posts."

A few days before Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's *mahanirvana* in his upstairs room, Nand Lal stood on the opposite side of the street and looked up at Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's window. He began to weep. "Why is he leaving," he said, "and placing a burden of great responsibility on me?" The king was handing over to the defence minister. About the same time that Nand Lal asked this question, a friend visitng Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji saw his weak state and asked a more mundane question, "How do you feel?" He replied simply, "I would like to go to Khir Bhawani now." Death was coming and his thoughts turned to his spiritual mother with whom he shared a deep and abiding love for Kashmir.

Twenty years earlier was the crucial test of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's kingship. In 1947 Great Britain was relinquishing

control of the Indian subcontinent. At that time Kashmir was a princely state with a predominant Moslem population. Hindus and Moslems lived harmoniously together. Jinnah, the Moslem leader who wanted a sectarian state, visited Kashmir but was not able to destroy the harmony. Hindu separatists had no success either. The two communities wanted to live together in goodwill.

When partition of the subcontinent came there was no communal strife in the Kashmir Valley. The Moslems and Hindus remained united. Throughout India and the emerging nations of East and West Pakistan, plunder and massacre tore the two religious communities apart. This did not happen in Kashmir for spiritual unity remained intact. But a more terrifying threat arose.

The rulers of Pakistan wanted Kashmir. As they were not able to acquire it legally and were not in a position to send in the regular army, they assigned selected officers to arm and train Pathan warriors of the North West Frontier Region. Lured by promises of loot and land, the savage tribesmen were loaded into trucks and transported into Kashmir State.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji had seen them coming at least two months before because he had told a friend at that time to get all his possessions out of Baramulla, a village at the entrance of the Kashmir Valley, 60 kilometres from Srinagar.

As the Pathans neared Baramulla, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, in his room in his niece's house, was like a whirlwind of fire. With foaming mouth, bloodshot eyes and vibrating body, he yielded himself to the battle against malignant powers. Prior to this period his body had changed from an instrument of human consciousness to become a transmitting point for cosmic power.

When the Pathans captured Baramulla, they spent four days slaughtering the population and looting the houses. They murdered 3000 villagers. Meanwhile, in Srinagar the people armed themselves with anything that could be used as a weapon. The whole population was united in its opposition to the Pakistan invasion. But the state had no army and was not really in a position to defend itself.

A request for help was sent to the Indian Government. Troops were flown in and immediately opposed the enemy. The Pathans spread out through the Kashmir Valley, plundering, murdering and destroying non-Muslim sacred places. But the one site that they left untouched was the Khir Bhawani shrine. A local Muslim holy man warned the various marauding bands to leave it alone.

The invaders reached the outskirts of Srinagar. So wrapped up in conflict was Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji that even close friends hesitated to visit him. However, his lifetime companion Gobind Koul went to his house to ask his advice and was surprised to find Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji relaxed. He told Gobind not to worry because the battle was over.

Soon the Pathans were turned back by the Indian army. However, the fighting continued in the surrounding mountains and the conflict over the possession of Kashmir was debated in the United Nations Assembly. It was thought that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji visited the Assembly because he was heard to speak Russian during that period and was able to give information about the progress of the debates.

He told anxious people that he personally visited all the fighting fronts. He was not just a spectator. One well documented incident stated how a commander reported that a mysterious person was directing a particular operation and showing where to direct artillery fire. A military policeman was sent to Srinagar to search for the person. As Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji had been observed sitting near his window as if directing in this way, the policeman was taken to him. He recognized Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji as the mysterious person.

Once, during the following years, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji commented, "Kashmir is in the grip of consumption. I am sitting over it and will not allow it to drift away."

Some people might question whether saints should involve themselves in human battles. But if a saint recognizes the world as

God's manifestation, does he have any alternative but to join in the struggle for the triumph of peace and unity? Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji has really been a forerunner. The battle for the world itself is soon to take place. Armies of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji are needed to train themselves for the fight against disunity and destruction.

Beyond the *tattva* of *Shuddhvidya* is the *tattva* of the Divine Lord and Creator – *Ishwara*. In this *tattva* is the power of assuming any and every form. A person at this level lives as the essential being of everything. "This am I," he says. Omnipotent as this consciousness is, it appears as almost complete powerlessness in the individual, for it can only live as the individual. It can quicken, enhance and develop the individual, but it can only direct according to the desires of the individual. It is totally different from a possessing spirit that brings a different personality to the individual.

Because he had mastery in the *Ishwara Tattva*, Bhagavaan had no choice – he had to satisfy the petty demands of those who could meet him during the brief periods when his awareness came down from the plane of eternal bliss. Bullying by bosses, arrangements for weddings, success in examination, help in business – these sorts of anxieties were brought to him constantly and, feeling them in himself, he acted for their resolution.

A second consequence of mastering the *Ishwara Tattva* was dispassion. People who knew him well said that he was without personal ego. Even the greatest saints have desired to see their consciousness reflected in a group of disciples. This was not the case with Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. He discouraged any sort of attachment to himself, and when people came seeking a Guru he directed them to someone else. With him all people retained their freedom. Most saints have wished to appear holy. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was willing to eat meat and to drink alcohol, using the ground as a table. He smoked cannabis and other herbs in a pipe called a *chillum*, and at one period of his life consumed large amounts of opium.

There is no sort of action in the highest *tattvas* as they merge upwards into the unity of Siva-Shakti and the pure freedom and awareness that is Parama Siva (Supreme Shiva, the Asbolute, the Ultimate Reality). Yet the ancient sages of Kashmir did have a test for people who had attained highest consciousness: did they accept their role in the cosmic drama and carry on the ordinary duties of life without being deluded by attachment to either? Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, King of Kings in the kingdom of Cause and Creation, was also Gopinath Bhan who personally cared for his younger sister, and later reared some of his nephews and lived his life as an ordinary city dweller.

Even though there is no action in the highest levels of consciousness, there is a vibration that carries with itself the power of the Absolute. This animating power is perfect egoity – the 'I' awareness of the whole universe – and it stirs in every *tattva* and every being. It is there within every person, ready to crumble the walls of conditioning and limitation so that true ego can shine forth.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was a master of the cosmic vibration. Sri S.N. Fotedar wrote in the biography of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji: "It is my belief that Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji regarded this as a very superior and direct method of Self realization though it involved much taxing effort and many tribulations."

The way of vibration is the way of attuning to the Infinite without dogma and without religion. A person does not have to believe anything. He does not even have to believe that there is a God. Usually it only appears in a person when he is open to receive it, but there have been instances when it appeared in individuals unwilling to receive it. In its mature development it causes the human body to cease to be an energy source for a limited consciousness that perpetuates itself through procreation and becomes a powerhouse for universal awareness.

Although the vibration is still given by the ever-living Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, the method did not remain the same. It is found in any religion of power. Jesus had promised his disciples power and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was the coming of this celestial energy. It blazed as tongues of fire on their heads while they expressed a newborn universal consciousness by speaking in tongues and under the impact of the cosmic vibration, behaved like drunken men. In its early days Christianity continued as a religion of power.

The quaking and shaking reported in accounts of religious revivals arises from the impact of the animating power of the Absolute on the human body, seeking to purify it, divinize it and turn it into a vehicle of universal awareness.

Perhaps the gentlest forms of vibration arise from the repetition of *mantras* (a mystic syllable, word or group of words charged with divine or spiritual power) and from chanting. Many spiritual techniques use an uncomplicated form of direct vibration – the rhythmic movement of the lower abdomen. *Yoga* breathing, Sufi and Hasadim rocking, Zen concentration and Eastern Christian contemplation of the navel are all methods for awakening power within the human body by inducing vibration. But they do not become fully effective until the movements cease to be under the control of the limited mind and become inspired by the universal mind.

This universal mind expresses itself, not only in human bodies, but in the world as a living entity. In receiving the vibration, people receive power. The Earth has already received it, so that there are many sites of power throughout the world. But mankind has sorely wounded the Earth, so the most necessary work at the present time is to heal the Earth so that its power can flow freely.

P. Simpfendorfer

# C. WHEN I LOOK AT THE PORTRAIT OF BHAGAVAAN GOPINATH JI

The first time I looked at the portrait of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was in his *ashram* in Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi. Later the portrait was replaced by a marble *murthi*. I happened to visit this place a number of times and had so many occasions to look up to him. Next it was the *ashram* at Uttam Nagar where again I looked at his *murthi*. In the meantime some literature published by the Foundation also was seen by me including Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's biography, which I wrote and these contained many of his different photographs, which I have been seeing time and again. My experience has been that this gaze at his photograph, *murthi* or portrait has been so fascinating, so inspiring and so invigorating. It gives us a new zeal, imparts fresh energy and fills with enlightenment.

The first thing that I see is the radiance, the sparkle and the shine that emanates from his face. The rays of light radiate from his forehead in particular and simply mesmerize me. The effect is some sort of a trance in which I feel at peace with myself. This is an experience better felt than described. Then the light of his eyes penetrates, as it were, the mind and I feel that it is purified and put on a meditative mode where I can see piety and pious resolutions directed towards truth. Of course, it is not possible to withstand the dazzle and, therefore, my eyes involuntarily look downwards. Then again I raise my head and have a look at the portrait. I feel Vedic chants are sprouting forth from his delicate lips. I get a feel of a magical environment in which the seed syllable OM resounds and instantaneously I perceive that God is all over the place in the form of the *Shabda Brahma*, the Eternal Sound.

Thereafter I look up to his spotless white turban and the traditional Kashmiri attire, *pheran* and get a message of the three golden words, which Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji himself has prescribed as virtue for a pious noble person. The message is to lead a life of

simplicity, purity and truthfulness. These qualities should not only be preached but must be translated into action so that these are manifest in our thought, word and deed. His hands assure me of his benign grace and give me great solace that he is always there to hold my hands and put me on the right track should I venture to falter or go astray. His broad *pheran* is a shelter for me. I am assured that he is there to provide me a safe haven from all troubles and tribulations. This shelter will protect me from all difficulties. It is there to cover me so that no shade of any evil falls on me and I remain unscathed from the turmoil of this world.

When I see his partially hidden right foot, I begin to perform *padma-puja*, worship of grown lotus, the symbol of life. I worship this lotus and pray that my life too be like a lotus, unscathed and unaffected by the ups and downs of the world around me, where I conduct myself as a member of the vast association of mankind. I remember what Sri Gita ordains us to be *padma-patram-iva ambasa:* "like a lotus pod in the waters."

I see him as my father, my mother, my Guru, my guide and my saviour. I feel safe at his feet and am assured of protection, guidance and enlightenment. I am confident that he will liberate me from ignorance, show me the path of righteousness and steer the boat of my life safely. I see in him God and he tells me to see the same God in myself and in everything around me. I believe in him, I trust him and have immense faith in him. I am, therefore, sanguine that this belief that everything here verily is God will one day, with the grace of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, fructify and I will realize this universal truth. I know that if I ask him for some mundane and worldly comforts, he will certainly oblige me. But why ask for a transient and temporary pleasure, when you can get from him permanent bliss for asking? I implore him to give me an ever-lasting divinity that will give meaning to my life. This assurance I always get from him by merely looking at his portrait either in one of his *aashrams* or at my home or in any publication.

Not to speak of the pleasure I derive from his portrait, I feel and experience a satisfying happiness even when I meet a devotee of his or have a chance to talk about him with any noble soul. At that moment I feel his presence near me. He guides my thoughts and words and eventually when these thoughts and words are put to action and implemented, the results are pious. I often get a silent message from him to turn to the Bhagavadgita for light and guidance. I remember his statement that any *shloka* from seven hundred and odd verses of this holy book can be our mentor and preceptor. Even so he also enjoins upon me to turn inwards to search the truth and not waste my energy in searching outwardly.

Whenever I sit before his portrait I experience tremendous amount of concentration. My mind does not wander aimlessly even though in the words of Arjuna, it is fickle, arrogant and hard to control: "*chanchalam hi manah Krishna, pramathi, balavad dridam.*" I try to ponder over the purpose of my life, the secret of the human existence, the creation and the creator as also their mutual relationship. The rays emanating from his eyes keep me focused and I feel that my inquisitive search is in the right direction. When I see his *chillum* and the *dhooni*, both having fire inside, I am reminded of the famous *shloka* in the Bhagavadgita, which goes like this, *Brahmaarpanam, Brahma havi, Brahmaagnau, Brahmana hutam, Brahmaiva tena gantavyam Brahma-karma-samadhina:* In this vast gigantic sacrifical fire oblation, the giver of oblation, the receiver of oblation, the fire proper and the purpose and objective of the sacrifice all are the same Divine, no doubt. I feel that this message is the crux and substance of the different messages given by our beloved Bab Bhagavaan and the sooner we realize this, the better for us and our enlightenment.

**T.N. Dhar 'Kundan'**

प्रथम दिवस आवरण FIRST DAY COVER






भगवान गोपीनाथजी BHAGWAN GOPINATHJI

The high point of the centenary celebrations was the issue of a three-rupee commemorative stamp by the Government of India to honour Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji.

As a part to Commemorate the birth centenary of the Jagatguru, a foundation with the name 'Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji Charitable Cultural and Research Foundation' was created at Uttam Nagar, New Delhi. On 30 January 2000 the relics were carried to Uttam Nagar in a grand procession for installation there.



Jagatguru Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji at his "Chillum" in his usual ecstatic mood.

# Om Namo Bhagavate Gopi Nathaya



**Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji at Chondapora (Habbakadal) 'asana' 1957-68**

**His Enchanting Symbols:-**
1.Rudraksha Maala 2. Container of religious books 3. Stock of Tobacco 4. Towel 5. Tongs 6. 'Ahuti' for 'Trikoti devtas' 7. Babooti 8. Chillum item 9. Stone sheet 10. A slab of stone. 11. Iron sigdi 12. Dhooni 13. Tobacco for Chillum 14. Chimta for Chillum. 15. Water Container Covered and a tumbler full of water over. 16. Bolster 17. Blanket 18. Drinking water 19. A way through 20. Tika Box.


**Jagat Guru Bhagavaan Gopi Nath Ji**
**Charitable, Cultural & Research Foundation (Regd.) 1/B,**
**Dayalsar Road,**
**Uttam Nagar,**
**New Delhi - 110059.**
**For your bliss please visit;**
**Website :**
**www.bhagavaangopinathji.com**
**E.mail:jagatguru1999@yahoo.co.in**


A full view of his Sanctum Sanctorum at Braikujan, Habba Kadal, Srinagar Kmr.
It was his 11th house, here he stayed for the longest period upto 28 May 1968.

भगवान् गोपीनाथ जी के प्रति

## श्रद्धांजलि

ज्योति भूमि जय भारत देश ।
ज्योति चरण धर विचरे प्रभुवर
जहाँ विविध धर वेश ।
समाधिस्थ सौन्दर्य हिमालय,
शुभ्र शान्तिमय, आत्म-तेज-मय,
गंगा यमुना जल ज्योतिर्मय
हँसता जहाँ अशेष ।
लोटे यहाँ धूलि पर ईश्वर
राम कृष्ण गौतम का तन धर
आए गोपीनाथ महात्मा
लाए प्रभु सन्देश ।



श्री सुमित्रानन्दन पन्त

श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करता मन
मंगलमय हो दिव्य आगमन,
पावन करे धरा को उनके
पद रज कण, हर क्लेश ।
ज्योति भूमि जय भारत देश ।

Homage to Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji in
Hindi Poem written and recited by
Shri Sumitra Nandan Pant, The National Poet

Jyoti Bhumi Jai Bharat Desh.
Jyoti charan dhar vichare Prabhuvar,
Jahan vividh dhar vesh.
Samadhisth saundarya Himalay,
Shubhra shantimay, aatma-tejmay,
Ganga Yamuna jal jyotirmay,
Hansta jahan ashesh.
Lote yahan dhuli par Ishwar,
Ram, Krishna, Gautam ka tan dhar,
Aaye Gopinath Mahatma,
Laye Prabhu sandesh.
Shradhanjali arpit karta man,
Mangalmay ho divya aagaman,
Paavan kare dhara ko unke
Pad raj kan, har klesh.
Jyoti bhumi Jay Bharat Desh.

# D. WONDERFUL AASANA OF BHAGAVAAN GOPINATH JI

Various are the forms of the Saguna Bhagavaan. He descends to uphold the dignity of mankind. He does some miracles, just to help the needy with this *yogic* power. He is always absorbed in the *yoga bhaava* (feeling of union with the Absolute Reality), which is the transcendental nature of Shiva.

In the present era, we have around us the vibrations of *brahma bhaava* (the feeling of bliss of realizing Brahman) and *yoga bhaava* of Bhagavaan GopinathJi. Today he is not in his physical body, but his *sukhshma sharira*/subtle body is always ready for our spiritual guidance inspiring us with his *abhaya mudra*. These are to be realized, through our *samarpan*/dedication, *bhakti*/devotion and *tapasya*/austerities.

How to visualize the *Brahma bhaava* of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji?

We are blessed with his *murta bhaava* in the form of a *chitra*/ image graph, taken once, during his last ten years of *sadhana* at Chondapora Habba Kadal. The chitra is captioned as: Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji at Chondapora (Habbakadal) Braikujan : Asana 1957-68.

## HIS ENCHANTING SYMBOLS

### *Rudraksha – Mala (Rosary)*

*Rudraksha* is related to Bhagavaan Shiva. Literally, Rudraksha means the Eyes of Rudra. Rudra is the Divine Being adored in the *Yajur Veda*. Kashmiris recite the Rudra *mantra* for the eco-balance of the globe and for personal spiritual evolution. Shiva Purana reveals the episode of *sati*, who entered the agni (fire) at the altar of Daksha Prajapati, on the ground when Lord Shiva was not invited to receive Daksh's Homa *ahuti*/sacrificial portion. This made *Sati*, the daughter of Daksha sad, and made her sacrifice her own being to

redeem the honor of Shiva. This is known as Shiva Bhakti. Shiva could not withstand that situation, hence through His emotive *krodhagni*, His *raudri* (anger) tears fell on the scared spots of the Himalayas, which eventually developed into a tree, bearing the Rudraksha seed. This Rudraksha bead is either five faced or single faced. Bab Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji would wear the *panchamukhi rudraksha mala* around his neck, knotted with the white beads known as Ladr'u Daan'u in Kashmiri dialect. The composition of the *mala* worn by Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji suggests that *Purusha* and *Prakriti* are woven to form the intellect and emotion together for the *grihastha* (householder) and *sannyasa*. Both these attributes are linked with Bab Ji. The visible Nine Ladr'u beads signify the Nava Durga aspect within the Shaivi-state of mind of the Bab Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji.

*Container of Religious Books*

A householder is required to have the religious books, known as the sacred books at home, so that the proper *samskaras* be given to the posterity. Also keeping of sacred texts in the basket as shown reveals that the sacred texts are for the religio-spiritual guidelines. These texts were the Shiva Purana, Bhavani Sahsranama, Devi Bhagvatam, Guru Gita, Bhagvatam, Bhagavadgita, Pachastavi, Indrakshi, Mahimna Stotra, Sri Ishvar Pratyabijnya, Nitya Snana-Sandhya Upasana and Ramayana. These are all for the coordination of *dharma-artha-kama-moksha*, the four segments of human aspiration.

*Stock of Tobacco*

Since Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji would smoke, for being absorbed in the higher ecstasy, so the tobacco was put in a bag canister. It was not open, meaning that such things are not for the common devotees, but for those who could contain themselves after being addicted to such things. It was just like a *halahala* (poison) as Lord Shiva absorbed to save the Devataas, from the wrath of the Raakshasas.

### *Towel*

Towel is known as the *prakshalan patta* in Sanskrit. It would always be on the right hand side of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji on his pillow. Since Kashmiri Pandits would handle the *khos* (cup) for taking tea with a towel, therefore, it is a guideline for all of us to take tea not with bare hands, but with a towel, to maintain the sanctity of what we take or drink. Care should be taken that water tumbler should be wrapped with a towel, to maintain the Kashmiri Pandit tradition of etiquette.

### *Chimta*

*Chimta* is tongs in English language. It happened to be an ayudha/weapon for keeping the burning *samidha* (firewood) within one's control. It is an instrument of iron consisting of two arms hinged and fastened together, for seizing, holding or lifting the burning charcoal. It is to seize the *ahankara* within and to put it within the flame of *jnana,* so that ego is turned into ashes. This instrument is also used for singing a *kirtana* to glorify the *Ishta Deva.*

### *Ahuti*

*Ahuti* (oblation) is an integral part of the *Vedic anushtthans/* invocaton to the devatas. It comes under the injunctions of the *Vedic homas.* The *Vedas* say:

*Kasmai devaaya havishaa vidhema,* which means an enquiry of the Rishi about the name of the Devata to whom the *ahuti/* oblation be offered. Bab Bhagavaan completes the *mantra* with, *Trailokya Nathaya, Trikoti Devataayai havishaa vidhema.*

"I am giving the *ahuti/*offering to the Supreme Divine being, Who is the Controller of the *Triloka,* where *Trikoti Devatas* find their abode." Giving of *ahuti* in the name of the *Devatas* (deities) is highly acclaimed in the Kashmiri Pundit tradition, as the offering of the *ahuti* brings the person in close connection with the Divine. The *Ahuti* is for eco-balance of the globe, as well. *Ahuti* is for the *Vaishva Deva,* who is invoked with the prescribed *Vedic Mantra.*

### *Babooti*

*Babooti* (holy ash from sacred fire known as *dhooni*) is very dear to Mahadeva. *Babooti* means the essence of what has been offered to the *Trikoti Devatas*, through *Agni Devata*. *Babooti* can be termed as the pure, *sattva*, as it is of the remains of the *shuddha ahuti*. Lord Shiva gets highly pleased with the application of the *babooti* on the forehead of the devotees. Therefore, Bab Ji would apply the *babooti bindu* within his *tilkam* (auspicious mark on the forehead). Bab Ji would use this *babooti* for the healing purposes. Since the *babooti* happened to be sanctified with Rudra-Pattham, and the *Bahurupa Garbha Mantra*, including the Panchastavi and Indrakshi, It would get the higher potency as per Shaivistic and Shakta scriptures. *Babooti* happened to be the essence of the *sadhana* of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji.

### *Chillum*

*Chillum* is the earthly consciousness of Bab ji. It is made of clay. Its design is the *prasara*/expansion of the Shiva-consciousness, from the design, as Bab Ji had it. While puffing at the *chillum*, the *yogi's prana* travels inside and touches the very core of the *Manipura charka* (fourth vortex or naval centre). It is related to the *yogi*, who surrenders all his thoughts to Shiva, and thus attains *samadhi*. Bab Ji would experience that through the puffing of chillum.

### *Kani Paitri*

*Kani Paitri* or Sone Slab is linked with the Shailaputri aspect of the Durga. It is the base of the *yoga*. The great saints do keep it for getting the Shailaputri vibration, as the Paitri is directly linked with the Bhu Devi. For Bab Ji, Sri Sharika is the Shail-Putri, as he used to play with the Nava Koti Murtis of the Hari Parbat.

### *Kani Pal/Solid Stone*

*Kanipal* or the solid stone is the identity of the Shiva and Shakti, which is known to be essential for the preparation for *Annapurna* in the Kashmir Shaivistic Nirvaana-Paddati. This is the

second stage towards reaching the Shikhara of the Chakreshvara, closely related to the Bhaava Mudra of Bab Ji.

*Shastur Manan/Iron Stove*

Shastrav Manan or the iron stove, is to ward off all the evil forces from the environment, and to keep away the effects of *Shani/* Saturn. Otherwise, iron *kunda* (pot) has not been recommended in the *homaagni*, but Bab Ji would give *ahuti/*oblation to the deities in this iron *kunda*. It can be inferred that Bab Ji was doing his *Tantrik* oblations as well. The *tantriks* use the iron pots in their *homas*.

*Dhooni*

*Dhooni* (the sacred fire for oblation) is linked with the *Aghora* worship. It must be burning constantly. It is known as the *Chita Agni Sambhutta*, which happens to be the altar fire of consciousness. *Dhooni* is the best explanation of human life. *Dhooni* needs to be preserved, as the body needs to be preserved for keeping the *yoga* intact, within the orbit of *mooladhaara* and *sahsraara chakra*. *Dhooni* carries *ahuti* to the Deities, who are revered as *Dik Dikpals*, *Dhakini-Shakini-Sakibni-Chakara Vakini*, the Bhairava and Bhairavi.

*Tobacco*

Tobacco for *chillum*. The *chillum* of Bab Ji is the Shiva Swaroopa and the tobacco itself is the materialistic manifestation, which needs to be burnt, for reaching the higher state, where *dhyana* would deepen the *dharana* – fixity in the *samadhi*.

*Chimtta*

*Chimta* for the *chillum* is to be used as an instrument not to touch the fire, but use it with care, so that the devotees would feel that small instruments do carry significance in their *sadhana*. It is to select the burning coal ash of *tamas/*ignorance.

### *Gagar*

*Gagar* is a water container representing the *Hirnayagarbha* of the *Vedas*. It is the projection of the *Brahmanda*, where *Varuna* is the *Deity* of Excellence. All the *Kalash Puja* (worshipping the water filled pitcher) is dedicated to *Varuna Devata*. A tumbler full of water is the maximum satisfaction, which Bab Ji would get, as he would keep the water resources filled for the humanity.

### *Bolster*

*Bolster* is a *takiya*. It is long under pillow, a support for rest. The body of the *yogi* must always be in equipoise; hence the bolster would serve the purpose. It keeps the physical body in harmony within *dharanaa*/yogic fixity.

### *Chaadar*

*Chaadar* means a blanket to cover the body from severe cold. Some times, the *yogis* want to hide themselves, or to do *sadhana* in dense darkness during day time also. Hence Bab Ji would wrap himself with the blanket. It serves as an apron during *sadhana*.

### *Gadha*

*Gadha* is the pitcher with drinking water not for personal use alone. He would keep that ready for the Devatas, as they would get *abhishekam* (ritual involved in bathing an idol with water, milk, honey, ghee, and so on) from this saint-extraordinary.

### *Wati Pod*

*Wati* or a way through is for the constant reception to the Devatas. They would walk through the *sadhana sthala* of Bab Ji and communicate with him.

### *Tika Katsul*

*Katsul* is a container for the colour used to put a mark on the forehead. It is used in the *Panch-Upachaar Puja*, *Dash-Upachaar*

*Puja* and the *Shodasha Upachaar Puja* of the *Ishta Devi* Sri Ragnya and the presiding Deity of Kashmir Shri Sharika. He would invoke His Devis, and would apply *tyok/tilkam gandham* to the Divine Mother and on his forehead as is seen in his photograph. The pituitary gland gets charged through the *tilkam* applied on that spot. It is also known as the *trinetra* (third eye) of Shambhu.

This *asana* is the cosmic consciousness of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji in the *sahaj mudra* (natural bodily posture), dedicated to Mata Tripura Sundari. Looking carefully at the *asana*, it appears to me the Hiranyagarbha form of Bab Bhagavaan.

**Dr. C.L. Raina**

## E. GOD AND GURU AS MOTHER

A friend of mine informed me very recently that some devotees of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji would address him as Mother. He also referred to another ardent devotee of his who used to consider Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji as an incarnation of Maa Sharika and would, therefore, recite certain *sholkas* in praise of Goddess before him. I have had the occasion to participate in some *bhajan* sessions organized by some devotees of Satya Sai Baba where Sai was addressed as Sai Maa. This raises a very pertinent but interesting question whether it is alright to address our preceptor as mother. Obviously there must be some justification for such an attitude or else we would not come across these examples.

Those who believe in God either consider Him to be with form or formless, with attributes or without attributes but omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. Those who believe Him to be with form contemplate Him in different forms. Shaivites give Him the shape of Shiva, naked, smeared with holy ash, with *damroo* (small drum) and trident in His hands and the Ganges flowing from His hair locks. Vaishnavaites deem Him to be Vishnu with ten different *Avataars*, Rama and Krishan being the chief ones. As Vishnu He is seated on Sheshnag and Brahma is on the lotus balancing on His navel. As Rama He is holding bow and arrow and as Krishna, He is playing on a flute. Then there are Shaktas who have conceived God as a mother. She is Kali, the eternal time, Laxmi, the giver of wealth and prosperity, Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and awareness, Shakti or Parvati, the energy aspect of the Supreme Divine. In Bhawani Sahasraman, the Lord has Himself admitted that it is through Bhawani that He creates and sustains this entire universe.

There is yet another form in which our seers have conceived the Divine and that is Aradhanarishwara or a combination of male and female. This is very unique and meaningful. It represents the Absolute Divine and the dynamic energy aspect of His. It is variedly referred to in our scriptures as Purusha-Prakriti or Shiva-Shakti or

Prana-Rayi. In Chinese philosophy it has been named as 'Yun-Yung' and the scientists have described it as the matter and force. The two are one and the same thing and thus inseparable. Here again Shakti or force is given relatively more prominence. There is an old story about a saint, who believed in absolute Shiva and had approached another saint, and ardent believer in Shakti for discussion. The latter received him affectionately but did not encourage a discussion with him. Presently a milkmaid passed by selling milk. The elder saint requested him to fetch some milk from her so that both of them could consume it. He came out of his lodging and asked the milkmaid for some milk. She agreed but wanted him to help her put the milk-pitcher off her head. The saint applied all his force but could not move the pitcher from her head even an inch. The woman taunted him by saying, "It seems you have no Shakti (strength)." So saying she disappeared and the superiority of *Shakti-upasana* or worship of the Lord in His female form was clear to him and he accepted his defeat without having got an opportunity to have a discussion on the topic.

Now the question arises why do we treat the Lord as mother and why should we consider our preceptor, Guru, as our mother. God in His absolute form is treated as Father, a towering and all-pervading entity. God in His dynamic form is treated as Mother, kind, benevolent and loving. Likewise when our preceptor leads us on the path of spirituality, guides us and steers the boat of our search for the truth, he is a father, enforcing discipline, strict and tough. When he shows compassion and kindness for us, treats us with love and affection and gives us shelter under the umbrella of his benign and sympathetic disposition, he is our mother and we are his loving children. In this form he tolerates our tantrums, is playful towards us and cares for us as Yashodha would care for young Krishna. Whenever we are in trouble, in pain or suffering we remember our mother and call her to come to our rescue. In *Atharva Veda* even the earth that sustains all living things is referred to as mother. The mantra is *Mata bhumi putro-aham prithivyam*: "The earth is the mother and I am the son of mother earth."

There is another aspect to this topic of discussion. When we examine our beloved Bab Bhagavaan's physical life we find that he worshipped both Shiva and Shakti forms of the Divine and yet he was more drawn towards the mother form, Sharika, Zeshtha, etc. His close devotees saw him getting merged with the Divine and thereby attaining the *sayujya* (absolute identity with Lord) position. It was, therefore, natural and logical for them to see Goddess Sharika in him and treat him as their mother. Sharika is the presiding deity of Kashmir. Sharika (Sarika in Sanskrit and Haer in Kashmiri) means the bird myna, which put a pebble on the mouth of the cave where the demon Jalodbhava was hiding and thus saved the sages from his wrath and interference. The pebble eventually became a hillock and came to be called *Hari-parbat*, the hill of the Myna. This hill is the abode of Goddess Sharika where our beloved Bab used to meditate, where he used to go for circumambulation and where he showed Sharika to his friends in the form of a young girl and gave her some savoury to eat. Eventually he became one with Her. No wonder some knowledgeable devotees treat him and address him as mother. He is our father to guide us, our friend to encourage us and our beloved to love us. Above all, he is our dear mother to protect us and to shower upon us his benign *anugrah* (grace). He is with us all the time and his blessings are available to us if only we tread on the path of righteousness shown by him. He has taught us the *moola-mantra* (fundamental principle) of *seva* and *sadhana*, or service and spiritual exercise.

T.N. Dhar 'Kundan'

## F. HIS MESSAGE

World of theosophy is a vast ocean of divine theorem – an unscaled Himalaya of spiritual heights; it is a holy realm of deep meditation with a depth deeper than the human thoughts. It is a divine fusion between a deity and a piety having a spiritual valency with a cosmic coherence of faith, truth and alliance. A saint is not bound to exhibit miracles because he is the divine treasure of bliss which pours in a panacea shower of bliss whenever a piety is in pain, distress or trauma. A piety is bound to be true devotee as to follow the gospels of His Master to fulfill the Master's will and get liberated from the nagging cycle of birth and death.

Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is known as 'Bab Bhagavaan" – the Jagat Guru for the entire human society emitting the blissful fragrance with a soothing dew of simplicity *(syezar)*, truth *(pazar)* and purity *(shuzar)* bedecked in a rainbow of religious and cultural ethos. These three words – simplicity, truth and purity are simply a hymn of Hindu philosophy; yes – a mystic mosaic of Lord in trinity, an immortal essence of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. Even a naked eye can find Brahma in a white attire sitting on the blooming lotus denoting the peace, composure and serene tranquility for the universe, Vishnu in blissful smile and grace as the true caretaker and Mahesh in His deep meditation in purity pouring the bliss and cleaning the mush of His devotees; yes – a truth in purity. These three fathomless words can sound very ordinary to an atheist but to a theist they are an umbel of spiritual inflorescence spreading shade and perfume of a serene saint who in all the simplicity, truth and purity dispels His bliss in an immortal radiance to those who inhale and inherit the gospels of the Master in totality and purity and with the thoughts within by disbursing the Master's teaching with a fountainous sprinkle of spiritual dew all over the theosophical meadows of a religious culture.

It reminds me of a fact that the towering pines in the woods are not irrigated by any gardener but by the immortal nature nourishing the gigantic tree to touch the fleet of skies because of

their simplicity, truth and purity in giving all the green grace, soothing shade and true timber to the human world. Babjei advocated His devotees to create a character of simplicity, a temperament of truth and pious thoughts to dispel and disburse the divine wisdom.

In mid-seventies, once I went to Babjee's *ashram* at Kharyar in Srinagar, not knowing much of the divine saint, sat in front of him and looked straight into his mesmerizing eyes, his glistening white turban, his graceful shroud (*pheran*) and the tricolor vermillion on his sparkling forehead. I was mesmerized to see such majestic saint and I asked Him in a murmour: "Sir! why don't you get up from the holy seat and bless the devotees?" To this, he replied: "Dear! You have asked me a question with rare simplicity, truth and purity. Don't you feel and find me besides you, I am always with my devotees, have faith in me and follow my gospel." After these words there was no conversation between him and me for the reasons known to his majesty. I left his holy court and narrated the conversational episode to my mother at home which she listened with utmost attention and said: "My son, you have been blessed with his bliss. Babjee is not in his mortal frame, it is His holy bust and your simplicity, truthfulness and purity made you to believe that his 'live self' was talking to you. Your future is going to be bright as his bliss has illuminated your ignorant path." I was spell-bound but shocked to realize that it was an illusion of theosophical realm with its divine legislation of spirituality. To me simplicity, truth and purity mean to be simple in ideas and thoughts and its presentation as naked and pure as the benign fire. Even today his blessed words ring in my mind and sound a 'gospel music' within my heart and those divine vibrations keep me agile and alive as simple, true and pure with gracious kindness of Babjei.

**Dr. Roshan Saraf**

## G. THE INSCRUTABLE GODMAN

A mystic tradition has it that a divine government functions and oversees the working of human affairs without a break with, of course, a change in the personnel from time to time. This, perhaps, explains why we have had a galaxy of *Avatars* (incarnations) and prophets, saints and sages, thinkers and philosophers blessing our mother earth at particular points of time in the history of our planet, if only to guide humanity and put it on the right course.

In the centuries-old spiritual history of the world, we have had Lord Rama establish the rule of moral law, Lord Krishna expound the fundamentals of perennial philosophy, Lord Buddha emphasize the evanescence of the phenomenal world and compassion for the living, Socrates sacrifice his life at the altar of truth, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, live, serve and suffer for mankind. Zoroaster incarnate the never-ending duel between vice and virtue, Confucius enunciate the ethical postulates, Mohammed, the spiritual giant of Arabia, teach us the principles of self-surrender to God and Gandhiji enunciate the concept of non-violence and passive resistance to evil.

### KING OF SAINTS

While all countries and nations have had their share of great seers and savants, Kashmir has had a long array of mystics, faqirs and godmen. The names that come to one's mind, among others, are Lalleshwari, Nund Rishi, Rupa Bhawani, Rishi Peer, Anandji, Jeevan Sahib, Sati Ded, Kashkak, Nandlal and, last but not the least, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. His pre-eminence as a great spiritual master was duly recognized by two of his contemporaries, the highly venerated mystics – Kashkak and Nandlal. The latter described him as "the king of the then divine set-up in Kashmir."

The sage led a simple, austere life. He covered himself with anonymity, never moved out of Kashmir and did not deliver any sermons. A mystic with healing touch, he brought solace to those stricken with malignant diseases.

He induced spirituality in his devotees by mere touch or by a mere glance or by sharing with them his smoke. Each received his grace according to his/her capacity. He often told the seekers of truth that intense personal effort and the grace of the Guru were essential prerequisites of God-realization. He abhorred lackadaisical form of worship which he thought was like moving under the shade of willow trees.

The very nerves of saints like Bhagavaan Gopinath overflow with inexhaustible energy and their hearts pour out a perennial stream of bliss all around. There was no Hindu, no Muslim and no Christian for him. He treated all equally irrespective of caste, creed or colour. An embodiment of compassion for all those who sought his grace, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji has been and continues to be an unfailing source of comfort to the afflicted souls and to assuage the throbbing pain of their anguished hearts. Men and women, young and old, the educated and the unlettered, the believers and the agnostics would visit him in and out of season to receive his blessings.

A mystic with a healing touch, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji brought solace to those stricken with malignant diseases. Often, he would give holy ash from his *dhooni* to cure ailments like tuberculosis, brain hemorrhage and mental disorders.

## BHAGAVAAN'S MISSION

We are passing through very critical times. Materialism has taken a firm hold over our minds, particularly those of the young. The moral and spiritual values are on the wane. The need to move from the outer to the inner life, to coordinate the scientific temper and the spiritual approach and to restore the efficacy of our ancient ethical, cultural and spiritual perspectives, has never been greater than now. And in this task, saints like Bhagavaan Gopinath show us the way, dispel fear from our minds and inculcate in us the much-needed faith and love.

One may recall Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's promise to redeem humanity which he revealed to Philip Simpfendorfer of Australia in meditation on 15 February 1978, about ten years after the sage had passed away into eternity. "In every land, we seek people who will stand like immovable rocks against the dark ocean of destruction... We do not interfere with religions. We want the well-being of the world," he stated.

Not bound by the limitations of space and time, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji has been munificent in answering sincere prayers anywhere any time. Perfect masters like him can materialize and dematerialize themselves and move with the velocity of light and utilise the creative light rays in bringing into instant visibility any physical manifestation. In 1947, he was heard asking in one of his soliloquies: "What is our army doing? Why are they not opening a direct route to Kashmir for Lamas?" And wonder of wonders, the Indian army did set up a direct link with Ladakh in 1948 after taking over Zoji La Pass and Kargil. A military police officer connected with this operation was informed by the Front Commander that a mysterious person directed the operations. Later, the said police officer visited Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji in Srinagar and confirmed that the saint exactly answered to the description given by the Front Commander.

Fifty years later, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji again directed the recent operations in the Tiger Hills, particularly at a time when the going was tough for the Indian army which was strategically placed in an extremely disadvantageous position. We have it on the explicit evidence of an officer of the Grenadiers, who, in his personal diary (excerpts, published in Excelsior in Jammu), testifies that on July 3, 1999, the incredible saint in his traditional Kashmiri attire appeared on the scene and what followed was "an all-night 11-hour assault by the Indian troops, leading to the recapture of the Tiger Hills on 4 July 1999. By now it is a piece of history and the saint-directed operation proved to be a turning point in the 40-day Kargil conflict.

*LIVING PRESENCE*

There is, however, a very thin line that can be drawn between his life before and after leaving the mortal coil. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji is as much alive today as he was in flesh and blood, ever steering the course of our lives. While many of us, like the present writer, have had the good fortune of seeing him in the blissful human form, those who did not, need not despair for the saint in his astral form has been appearing in dreams or in meditation of spiritual aspirants.

It is not surprising that a mere glance at his portrait gives to the man of faith the feeling of the presence of a living reality. He seems to talk through his lustrous and penetrating eyes. His angelic countenance takes charge of one's afflicted heart and fills it with effable joy and bliss.

G.N. Raina

# H. BHAGAVAAN CONSCIOUSNESS – A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The chronicle of events takes me back to year 1992 when I first entered the one-room *ashram* premises at Udaiwala. I am most unconventional in the sense of being religious. But for reasons beyond my understanding I remember the picture within the frame radiating un-definable brilliance and gripping me. Soon, I realized that the room held me in awe. After few days, I surprised myself as I was singing the notes of *aarti*. Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji Maharaj soon was directing course of events of our family. These were the days of strain – both economic and social and I found mental refuge under the merciful umbrella of Bub Maharaj. No decision minor or major was taken or is still taken without his consent. Any moment spent without wearing his locket seemed restless. Whatever influence of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji, I could feel in my family, the same can be generalised for all his devotees. The vast sea of humanity flocking his *ashram* compels one to think about spread of Bhagavaan consciousness and its sociological persective.

## UNIT OF OPPOSITES

Bhagavaan consciousness implies the flow of consciousness among people about Bhagavaan Gopinath ji's life and his capacity to direct our lives. The stream of consciousness has an all-embracing effect. Old and young, men and women, teachers and students – all are influenced by this consciousness in one way or the other. Bhagavaan consciousness is in fact unifying two seemingly separate things. Bhagavaan, though formless, is worshipped and idolized. Consciousness, on the other hand is more of a mental construct. One can have individualized views of Bhagavaan and one's own understanding of his form and his activities. Consciousness cuts across limitations posed by time, place and space. However, Bhagavaan consciousness is a manifestation of unity of opposites. There is no distinction between Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji and his consciousness as he belongs to both individual and society. For him, society is one child which needs his constant care, love and benevolence.

## BHAGAVAAN CONSCIOUSNESS: THEORITICAL ASPECTS

The emergence of Bhagavaan consciousness and its consequent diffusion is a journey from simplicity to complexity of phenomena; uniformity to multi-formity much akin to Darwinian or Spencer's evolutionary doctrine. The consciousness and its spread in its theological aspect involve emphasis on regular *aarti*, monthly *homas*, and annual celebrations. The realm of rites and rituals cannot be ignored keeping in view a common man's needs. The metaphysical element in Bhagavaan consciousness is evident in the manifold instances in which Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji and His teachings have been logically understood and followed by his followers. The rationale of collective *aarti* lies in the fact that it reinforces solidarity. The positivistic notions of Bhagavaan consciousness are thus seen and observed. The growth of *ashram* from a centre of religious place to a pioneer of socio-cultural and educational awakening is one which has followed a logical sequence of events.

According to Merton, there are two aspects of function – latent and manifest. The manifest function of Bhagavaan consciousness is to promote brotherhood, love, compassion and assimilation of great ideas of Bab Maharaj by society, that is, at societal level. The latent function, however, is concerned with the individual: To make individual realize the Vedantic Truth that Paramatma lies within Him. The awareness of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's *kripa* (grace) makes one realize his power and creation of a better human being, henceforth. The consciousness of his power, his mercy is gaining universal character with his devotees spread across the globe. At the same time, each devotee at his level presents the specific case of Bhagavaan consciousness personified. The diffusion and assimilation of this consciousness requires an effort on the part of all of us – a move from dissensus to consensus.

The collective conscience of the society has to be manifestation of Bhagavaan consciousness. Only when individual representation imbibes values preached by Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji

– the collective representations can succeed to spread Bhagavaan conscousness. The rites and rituals enhance solidarity while philanthropic activities of the *ashram* are the facts of Bhagavaan consciousness. It is not the individual which is more important but the society; particularly in times of cultural changes, exogenic factors being dominant, Bhagavaan consciousness is instrumental in tracing our roots.

## BHAGAVAAN CONSCIOUSNESS AS A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

The genesis of Bhagavaan consciousness as a social movement dates back to times when Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji was present in his physical form and does go beyond that also. The ideological basis of this movement are faith in Bab Ji's *kripa* and one's own capacity, performance of good deeds and, above all, heart felt concern for all fellow beings. The devotees of Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji spread across the world and within India are adhering to the ideology. Post migration this adherence is the key to socio-cultural survival of our community besides individual's spiritual awakening. The community has been exposed to hitherto unknown realms - socio, cultural, economic - and there can be ways of deviation. But as believers in Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's values and practices, we shall be guided. The spread of Bhagavaan consciousness has to be a mass movement and torch-bearer for all fellow beings.

## BHAGAVAAN GOPINATH JI AS AN AVATAAR

Though born in Kashmir, Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's influence has cut across the limitations of time and space. His life and principles can be drawn into analogy with Maryada Purshottam Lord Rama. Morality, social welfare were preached by him and latter is being inspected by him even now in one way or other. Some instances as I read from the book *The Saint of All Times* and got to know from the people reflecting upon Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's way of doing things much similar to that of Lord Krishna. The *lila* of Gopi – the Krishna and Gopis – the merciful Bhagavaan Ji can be seen in terms of an analogy. Like Krishna, he directed and

still directs his followers on the path of *dharma* and *karma*. One can even see reflections of Lord Buddha's thoughts in Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji. He also cautioned against *trishna* (temptation) and emphasized on right path, right beliefs and morality, like Buddhist Sangavaan consciousness. How music (*aarti, bhajans*) can be instrumental in spread of Bhagavaan consciousness reminds one of impact of Sufi and Bhakti movements. An analogy can be drawn thus between Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji and Avataars who have graced the mother Earth.

## BHAGAVAAN CONSCIOUSNESS AND GLOBALISATION

If relation can be established between Bhagvaan consciousness and ideals of previous *Avataars*, its relevance in era of globalisation is to be analyzed. Globalization implies integration of domestic economy with world economy. Since economy cannot be divorced from society, globalization influences and is influenced by various social factors. Integration is facilitated by tolerance, universal brotherhood, religious interface rather than religious discords. All such qualities are hall marks of Bhagavaan consciousness. Clearly there is no anti-thesis between Bhagavaan consciousness and globalization and the former is quite relevant. However, material pursuit lacking in concern for humanity will not yield fruit in the long run. Bhagavaan consciousness can thus help us to embrace 'globalization with a human face'.

## CONCLUSION

Based on above discussion one can understand the sociological dimensions of Bhagavaan consciousness and its relevance in present day world. Solidarity based on compassion and devoid of personal ego conflicts has to emerge. The spirit of enquiry, democratization of thought and scientific mind can elevate us from the level of only material being to spiritual being. As one sees more members following Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji's teachings, the Bhagavaan consciousness is sure to be torch bearer of humanity.

**Surmishta Kaul**

# I. GOPINATH JI AS PROMOTER OF INTERFAITH HARMONY

Bhagavaan Gopinathji, who lived in twentieth century, has emerged as a great *Shaivite* saint among Kashmiri sages. He shines like a big luminous star. Gopinathji's popularity is increasing with the passage of time as more and more people are becoming his devotees not only in India but also from other part of the world. Even the Government of India recognized his sainthood and issued a commemorative stamp on Gopinathji's birth centenary in 1998. Those who worship him are of firm conviction that they would never return empty handed after they have asked him for anything during prayers. His devotees prefix Bhagavaan with his name. Some of his devotees consider Gopinathji in the lineage of Rama, Krishna and Buddha. One of his foreign devotees states that Gopinathji exercised spiritual power unequalled since the time of Jesus Christ. This is disclosed in the biographies written on him by some of his close devotees.

One aspect of Bhagavaan Gopinathji which deserves to be magnified and highlighted is his firm belief in unity of religions. He had a universal outlook on religion and promoted interfaith harmony. He believed in one God whom he called Brahman. He said that one should think of Brahman or ultimate Reality as a tree whose branches represent different religions of the word. And if we sit on any branch of the tree we can attain Brahman as all branches proceed from the same tree. This statement paves the way for building mutual respect and harmony among different religions. The question arises if there is one God, then why there are so many religions in the world. When there is one God there should have been just one religion. To have one religion for the whole world is not in the Divine plan. Religions are born in all parts of the world from time to time. Though all religions teach same morality at the core, they highlight one particular value which was most needed in the society at the time of birth of that religion. Non-violence of Jainism, compassion of Buddhism and brotherhood

of Islam are such examples. Religions also teach that there is one God which is called by different names in different religions. Vedas proclaim that which exists is only one, the sages speak of it variously. Koran says that all creatures are members of one family of God. We are all God's children says Sikhism. Bible says that God hath made of one blood all nations that dwell upon the face of earth. Lord Krishna says in the Gita that whatever form people worship Me, I make their faith steadfast in that form alone. It underscores that people are worshipping one God through different names with faith which is strengthened by one supreme.

Other highly elevated souls like Bhagavaan Gopinathji also realize that there is only one supreme without a second which is addressed differently in different religions. Sri Ramakrishna gives an example where people come to a pond to fill up their pitchers with water. He says water is called differently by different people, some call it *jal*, some call it *pani* and some water. What every one is taking out from the pond is only one commodity which does not change its nature or property when called by different names. This is exactly that Gopinathji conveys when he calls Brahman as tree and its various branches as various religions. Sit on any branch and you can attain one Brahman. This is the truth which is the basis of all religions. Even though Gopinathji believed in one God he did not hesitate to worship Narayana, Shiva, Surya, Shakti and Ganesh to establish that all are His manifestations.

With his firm belief in one God and world as one family, Gopinathji proclaimed that service to humanity is the main purpose of human life. He emphasized that man should be ever willing to remove the miseries of fellow beings as they are no different than him. Those who are in distress must be helped as greatness of man lies when he helps his fellow beings irrespective of their caste, creed, race, nationality and sex. Only by helping others one can become selfless, which is a supreme quality for self evolution. Gopinathji says that he is a *karma yogi* who guides others with his own conduct. To those who studied scriptures his advice was that one should live the teachings of scriptures, otherwise their study

alone would be of no use. Gopinathji emphasized that all human beings are equal in the eyes of God and God realization is available to all to whatever religion they belong. Man can attain Godhood irrespective of his status and station in life. He also held the view that man does not have to go anywhere to obtain spiritual enlightenment. It can be obtained wherever one is, depending upon the intensity and sincerity of one's *sadhna*. Man must first become morally sound before entering spiritual life. Only a spiritual person can grasp unity of religions. Gopinathji called him an ideal person who was truthful, pure and straightforward. As truth is the basis of all religions, only a truthful person can perceive interfaith harmony, only a truthful person can think, speak and act harmoniously. A truthful person shall be straightforward in his conduct and would develop a pure and pious mind.

To understand interfaith harmony, we cannot remain within the set of rituals of our own religion. We have to imbibe the teachings of our religion into our inner being so that we feel an inner urge to transform ourselves. Such transformation will not only make us spiritual and would enable us to see at other religions favourably, we have to awaken ourselves to our inner being through inner transformation and then the world would appear to us as one family.

A pious and realized soul belongs to the entire mankind. His personality cannot be confined to one particular place or time. This can be said about Bhagavaan Gopinathji who spent his entire life in Kashmir but has his followers spread in India and even outside India. The greatness of Gopinathji lies when his message is heard at distant places without his being physically present there.

Gopinathji's message for interfaith unity is extremely relevant in the present times where people remain confined within the parameters of their own religion. Only when people rise above their own religion, they would realize that all religions are as good as their own and all religions belong to one spiritual garden.

**Lt. Col. R.K. Langar**

THUS SPAKE BHAGAVAAN GOPINATH JI

— Virtue lies in serving mankind.

— Public money should be handled with the same caution as if one is handling a snake.

— Truth cannot be patented, any honest seeker can attain it with the dint of his dogged perseverance.

— For the realization of the Divine a seeker has to put in hard labour and deserve the grace of his Guru.

— Whatever the difficulties a seeker may encounter, he must keep on loving God.

— By enlightening one another devotees can remain ever contented.

— Bhagavadgita is the guiding force and Panchastavi our *Sadhana*.

— Stand like a rock for the sake of righteousness.

— Persons of indiscipline get cursed before they get corrected.

— The purpose of religion is to elevate humanity, to be free from selfishness and passion and to instill love and knowledge of God.

— There should be a close co-ordination between the well meaning persons and associations in order to establish piety, purity and spirituality for the larger interest of the well being of mankind.

— A true seeker should avoid extra-ordinary gestures in spirituality.




## The Day of Celebration & Rejoicing. 3rd July

1. Our Bab Bhagavaan took birth on this day in the year 1898 at Bana Mohalla, Srinagar.

2. On this day Swami Vivekananda came to their house, apparently having a premonition that a great soul was going to be born.

3. The Government of India issued a special Rs.3 commemorative ticket on this day in the year 1998 on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of our Bhagavaan ji's Birthday.

4. In the same year on this day was announced the formation of Jagat Guru Bhagavaan Gopinath ji Charitable, Cultural and Research Foundation, which was formally inaugurated in the following year 1999.

5. On the same day in 1999 Shri Bhagavaan ji appeared on the Kargil war front and directed the army personnel to launch counter offensive that enabled them to regain control of strategic Mountain peaks.

6. On this auspicious day in the year 2000 was started a quarterly journal of the Foundation by the name, 'Prakash Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji' containing articles and devotional poems in English, Hindi, Kashmiri Urdu and Sanskrit.

This Day is auspicious for us all his devotees and needs to be Celebrated year after year with love, devotion and service.

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